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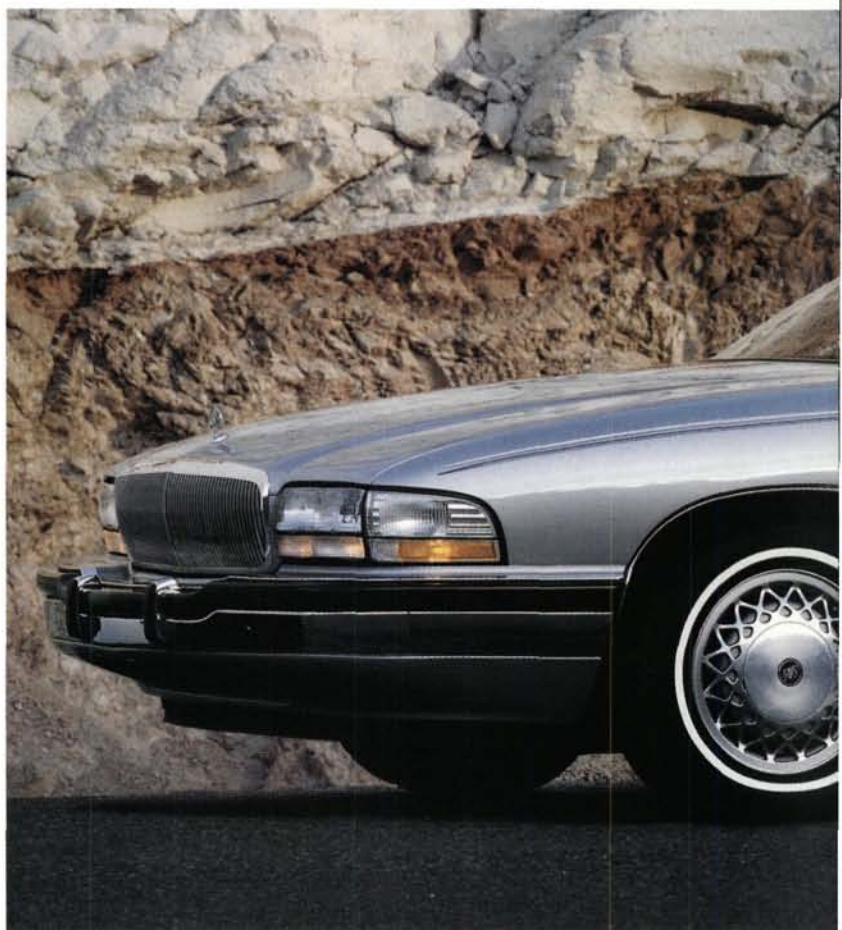
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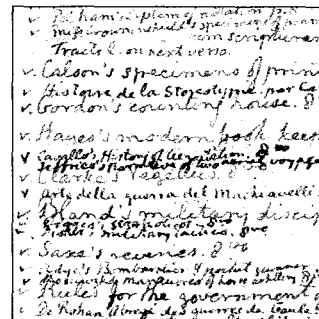
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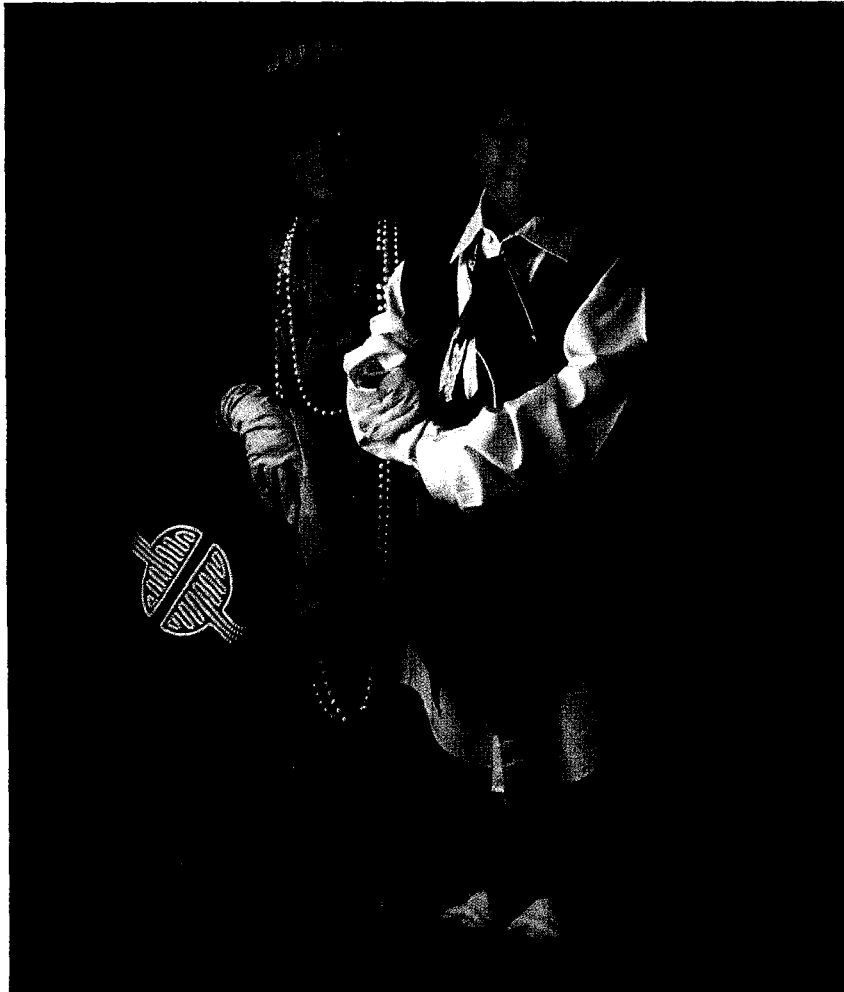
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745 BOY STREET

WHEN HE WAS A kid, Francis Davis, the author of the essay on John Zorn in this issue, wanted to be a singer—"Bobby Darin in particular," he says. "But then I joined my high school choir and found out that singing was hard work. Writing seemed easier. Little did I know."

Actually, Davis no more closely fits the stereotype of music critic as frustrated musician than his subjects, as he presents them, fit jazz stereotypes. Since he began writing for *The Atlantic*, seven years ago, Davis has covered the former Velvet Underground members Lou Reed and John Cale, the use of strings in jazz, and Tony Bennett, as well as many likelier subjects such as Ornette Coleman and Charlie Parker. The more recent of Davis's two books of jazz criticism, *Outcats* (1990), includes a chapter on Bobby Darin. "A jazz critic has to have peripheral vision," Davis says, "because the music that's called jazz at this point intersects with classical music, and with popular music, and with what is called avant-garde. Somebody writing about jazz, theoretically, has the whole field to write about, but rarely do you have that freedom, because most publications want

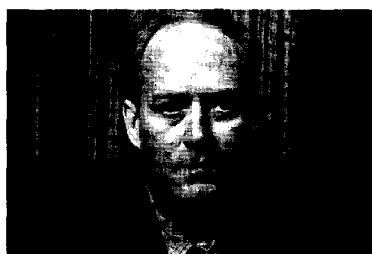
only certain kinds of stories. *The Atlantic* has never applied any pressure to write about anyone in particular. That's something I prize."

With the whole field, and everything on its periphery, open to exploration, how does Davis choose his subjects? He has one negative criterion: "I try to guard against being drawn to novelty." And one positive one: "I choose to write about something because I respond to it. I think of myself as a reporter, but my opinion is part of what I'm obligated to report. And what I feel about something can be the most difficult thing to sort out—what exactly drew me to that music."

"I like to take a particular recording as a point of departure—having that thing to come back to. It's the critics' equivalent of William Carlos Williams's 'No ideas but in things.' At the same time, I like writing about the people who make this music—not from some star-struck perspective but from the point of view of finding out what makes them tick and how that relates to the music."

Once again in his current article, on the "bad boy of Manhattan's fringe music scene," Davis plays these themes off each other, with brio.

—THE EDITORS



MICHAEL MALLY

Francis Davis

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The January Almanac was compiled with the assistance of Gail Cleere, on behalf of the U.S. Naval Observatory; Ted Moncreiff; and Lawrence Lichty, of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, in Washington, D.C.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



FOOD IRRADIATION

I have been somewhat involved in the debate regarding food irradiation, and would like to express some concerns that were either ignored or treated dismissively in Jacques Leslie's "Public Health: Food Irradiation" (September *Atlantic*).

1) The Food and Drug Administration has in essence declared food irradiation to be without danger. In doing so, it cited five studies on experimental animals as methodologically sound and central to the decision. I was asked to review these studies and submitted them to five statisticians and epidemiologists in my department who had no involvement or particular interest in the food-irradiation issue. They found that two of the five studies were remarkably flawed and did not document safety at all. In a third study the very large amounts of irradiation used resulted in weight loss and reproductive abnormalities until the investigators found that the irradiated grains had been made seriously vitamin-deficient, and corrected the deficiency by giving the animals supplemental vitamins. The other two studies appeared sound, but the dosage of irradiation was quite low. As a consequence of this review, I have said that although food irradiation may be safe, safety has not been documented by the studies quoted by the FDA.

2) The major problem with irradiated foods, in my judgment, is nutrient loss. There is widespread agreement that foods that are irradiated lose some of their vitamin content, and that this is dose-specific; the higher the irradiation dosage, the greater the vitamin loss. Furthermore, some studies suggest that irradiated foods show accelerated vitamin loss when subjected to freezing and thawing or heating. Irradiation proponents treat this dismissively, saying that we have redundant vitamins in our foods anyway. But the public is likely to be very concerned

about a trade-off of reduced nutrient content for longer shelf life. Furthermore, if irradiated foods are sold around the world and given to malnourished people, the issue of nutrient loss could be very important.

3) The Indian study cited by Leslie which shows that irradiated foods damaged chromosomes in malnourished children is indeed quite flawed and controversial, but it has not been discredited. The Chinese study that is used to support the claim that the Indian study should be discredited was not done on malnourished children; it was carried out on mostly young, healthy adults. Those given the irradiated foods showed an increase in chromosomal abnormalities that is of borderline statistical significance. The only reasonable conclusion is that both the Chinese study on normal subjects and the Indian study on malnourished subjects need to be repeated before a final judgment is made.

4) If there are many food-irradiation plants around the United States, surely the issue of transport of radioactive materials and their handling at local sites is a significant issue.

Food irradiation may be useful to society in the future, but proponents of the technology must provide answers to the issues raised in this letter before food irradiation is adopted for general use. Even if they are reluctant to speak to an issue like nutritional damage to foods, the public will demand it.

DONALD B. LOURIA, M.D.

*New Jersey Medical School
Newark, N.J.*

As a scientist who is still facing the controversy over the studies conducted at the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) in India, I find that Jacques Leslie has repeated the same old argument used by the national and international "experts" to discredit our original research. I would like to say that none of these "experts" has critically examined the experimental de-

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tails that appeared in our scientific publications and compared them with those of the others. Anyone who did so would have noticed the variations in the rate at which the radiation dose was delivered to the wheat, conditions of storage after irradiation, ingredients used to prepare the diets, duration of feeding, and so forth. Any or all of these variations could have contributed to the differences in the final results obtained at the NIN and other laboratories. It is standard practice in science that duplicate research is conducted under exactly the same experimental conditions, either to prove or to disprove the original research. Obviously this has not been done to disprove or discredit our observations. Hence the conclusions of the various "experts" seem to be unjustified.

VIJAYALAXMI, M.D.

*Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
New York, N.Y.*

Jacques Leslie states that "only a few [scientists] have publicly expressed opposition to [food irradiation], and the several other scientists who are actively against food irradiation are not experienced in the field." Most proponents of food irradiation are indeed experienced in the field, because they owe their livelihood to it. Opponents in academia, however, whose views are more dispassionate, are not wanting in number. On the several occasions when I have commented and testified before committees of the U.S. Congress and various state legislatures, I have been joined by a good number of distinguished and seasoned academicians who, like myself, have never worked for the food-irradiation industry and whose opposition to irradiated food is based not on employment or on unreferenced internal memoranda and committee reports by industry-sponsored panels but on scientific principles predicated on data from the peer-reviewed scientific literature. My views are based on the experience I have gained since receiving my doctorate, as a scientist at Cornell Medical College and Rockefeller University, and, since 1959, as a cancer-research scientist and biochemist at Roswell Park Cancer Institute, in Buffalo, New York.

I am opposed to the consumption of irradiated food because of abundant and convincing evidence in the refereed scientific literature that free radi-

cals formed during irradiation result in statistically significant increases in carcinogens (for example, nitrosamines) and mutagens (for example, formaldehyde) in the food. Whereas the unequivocal destruction of vitamins by irradiation can be overcome by supplementation of the diet—but is a cruel side effect in countries where such supplementation is not realistic—one cannot protect oneself from carcinogens placed in the food supply by irradiation. Furthermore, the doses of radiation allowed by the FDA will not sterilize the food, and the remaining organisms and their progeny are, by definition, radiation-resistant. Finally, irradiation at the permitted doses will not destroy the organisms that cause botulism, the most dangerous of the pathogens contaminating food. The organisms causing salmonellosis and trichinosis are easily killed by cooking. Thus the benefits to the consumer of food irradiation are questionable at best.

GEORGE L. TRITSCH
Buffalo, N.Y.

Jacques Leslie replies:

Anyone who has followed the food-irradiation debate for several years will recognize the names of the letter writers above; indeed, these scientists are part of the small band of anti-food-irradiation warriors who have been testifying against the process in legislative hearings ever since the FDA's 1986 pro-irradiation ruling. Unfortunately for them, their arguments are as familiar as their identities, and have been addressed repeatedly, and to my mind successfully, by proponents.

For example, Donald Louria surely knows by now that the five studies he cites were not "central" to the FDA's decision, as he indicates. Rather, the FDA reviewed more than 400 food-irradiation studies, and from those, selected sixty-nine that appeared to give strong indications—either positive or negative—of the safety of the process. Of those studies, only five were considered scientifically impeccable, and they all supported safety. However, FDA scientists believed that such a small number of studies was not sufficient to support any sort of sweeping conclusion. They therefore examined the 400-plus studies to see whether any patterns of toxicity appeared: if, for example, one study showed that

rats fed irradiated wheat developed kidney ailments, the scientists looked for problems caused by irradiated wheat in the other studies. The scientists found no pattern of toxicity, which gave rise to the reasonable assumption that the adverse effects cited in the studies were attributable to such phenomena as dietary restrictions imposed by the studies. To suggest, as Dr. Louria does, that the FDA "documented" food irradiation's safety on the basis of five studies is inaccurate.

Similarly, the arguments advanced by Drs. Louria and Vijayalaxmi concerning the NIN studies are well known. It is hardly surprising that the NIN's former director and his colleague, Dr. Vijayalaxmi, would defend a study they were involved in; what is more puzzling is why a food-irradiation opponent like Dr. Louria would continue to draw attention to the study even while he concedes that it is "quite flawed." Indeed, as Ari Brynjolfsson, the former director of the U.S. Army's food-irradiation studies at the Natick Research, Development and Engineering Center, in Massachusetts, has pointed out, its statistical basis is exceedingly improbable. It is for that reason, among others, that it has been disregarded by such varied institutions as the Indian government, the FDA, the World Health Organization, and the *Harvard Medical School Health Letter*, all of which have endorsed limited applications of food irradiation.

THE CHINA MARKET

Lynn Chu ("The Chimera of the China Market," October *Atlantic*) talks about the opening of China to Western business as just a strategy by its leaders to acquire Western technology. If that is the case, then what is the justification for creating special economic zones to permit largely free enterprise, encouraging small-scale private businesses, and promoting a general attitude toward private business which is reflected in the slogan "To get rich is glorious"? Chu talks as if none of China's leaders intended to move to a more free-enterprise system, when actually a large proportion of the elite very much wants to see China move away from socialism. The fundamental problem now is that there is an old-guard elite that still believes in the



Marxist ideals of its youth and can't accept throwing them away entirely. Once these people pass from the scene, the younger generation will start making radical changes.

Chu mentions that China predicts its people will have an average income of only \$800 by the year 2000, and concludes that American business was naive to view the country as a great potential market. However, thirty-five years ago Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea all had a standard of living below that of China today. If China experiences the same type of economic growth that Taiwan enjoyed for the past thirty years (until the recent government-induced economic contraction), by early in the next century China will be an economic powerhouse and the largest market in the world.

One area in which I agree with Chu is her discussion of how the China-expert community was deluded by the Maoist propaganda of the sixties and early seventies. Many of these people spent their formative years devoted to the Chinese Communist ideal, and have not given up their dreams of a socialist utopia. Until recently many in the academic community were predicting a return to something like the pre-Cultural Revolution days, and a lot of hostility still underlies China's embrace of capitalist methods. However, I disagree with Chu's conclusion that the academic community has been acting like cheerleaders for American investment in China. By the mid-1980s many were criticizing business's optimism about China, and predicting disillusionment and a backlash.

THOMAS M. CARROLL
Seattle, Wash.

Lynn Chu replies:

The popularity of theories of national character has always surprised and rather appalled me. How is it that the industrious German national character failed to stave off economic disaster under communism in East Germany? One prevalent Western misperception has been to equate China's totalitarian communist system with the authoritarian capitalism of Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea. The two are not analogous, economically or culturally. Chinese totalitarianism brought about a systematic purge of China's traditional culture in the name of absolute Party control, arbitrarily exercised by corrupt

officials over every aspect of life, particularly the economy. The destruction—physical, psychological, and economic—that has been wrought in the USSR and Eastern Europe under the communist system is documented afresh in the newspapers every day. Those nations provide a far closer analogue to what business faces in China than Singapore, Taiwan, or South Korea.

Advocating a "peaceful evolution" to capitalism or democracy is treason in China, and punishable by death. If there is such a thing as a "path" to capitalism, China certainly isn't on it. Even Zhao Ziyang's notions about the easing of authoritarianism landed him under house arrest. The much-exclaimed-about "revolution" under Deng consists primarily of how freely the Chinese victims of communism today express despair over their lot, in contrast with the total repression of the Cultural Revolution. Where is the Chinese Gorbachev, or Yeltsin? What will happen in China when and if he emerges? Business caution in the face of likely political and economic turmoil after the old men die seems much wiser counsel than presuming that there will be peaceful evolution. And Japanese concerns about nurturing a totalitarian state to power in the Pacific may well be both strategically and financially sound.

TRADE WITH JAPAN

Eamonn Fingleton has done it again ("Eastern Economics," October *Atlantic*). As in his previous *Atlantic* piece, about Narita Airport, Fingleton attributes the imbalance in U.S.-Japan trade to a deliberate plot by the "masterminds" (his word) of the Japanese bureaucracy.

No doubt American firms have found it difficult to enter the Japanese market, and Fingleton is right when he attributes these difficulties in part to high land prices and a complex web of distribution and retail trading. But he is quite wrong to claim that these are the result of deliberate planning and that they are intended as a means of protectionism.

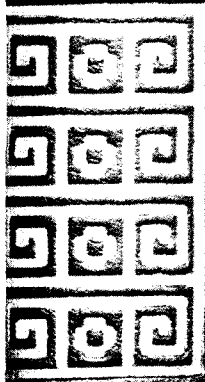
Quite the contrary. They are failures of the Japanese political system. High land prices have become a serious concern to the average Japanese. Japan is

creating a two-class society: those who own their homes and those who can no longer afford to buy them. Far from being a desired objective, the old-fashioned distribution system requires high margins to cover its inefficient use of scarce labor. As a result, goods are more costly in Japan than in Western countries. No wonder Japanese toy stores fear the arrival of Toys R Us on their shores.

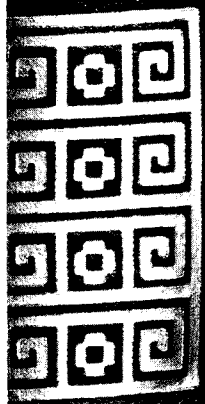
F. GERARD ADAMS
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pa.

For Eamonn Fingleton's information, the reason it is absurd to label the Japanese mercantilists has nothing to do with whether the Japanese government is or is not mercantilistic in its approach to trade. In fact, as he points out, that government probably does think of trade in that way. But who cares? The problem with mercantilism is not that it harms us. The problem is that it harms the average Japanese.

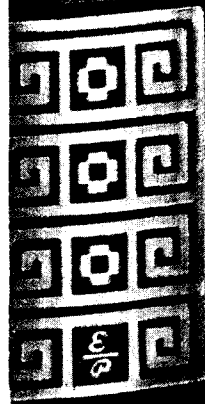
The theory behind mercantilism runs something like this: if we subsidize exports or restrict imports, we accumulate resources at the expense of our trading partners. Fingleton should know why this theory really is a close cousin to the flat-earth theory, although he neglected to say so in his article. Briefly: In foreign exchange two accounts are kept—the capital account and the current account. The capital account tracks investment. The current account tracks trade. Together they add up to the net flow of resources between two countries. They have to balance in a free-exchange market. Why? Because Americans pay for Japanese goods with dollars. Dollars are ultimately useless outside the United States. Every cent that goes out of the United States through investment or importation must eventually come back through American exports or investment in America. The only alternative is that Japanese firms accept dollars they will never use—that is, get nothing for the goods they sell us. This is not a theory, either "new" or "old," but it is basic arithmetic. It also explains why, given the policies that may distort trade in favor of Japanese exports, the exchange rates have continually adjusted to cause capital to flow from Japan to the United States. It is quite impossible for one nation to extract net resources from another.



THE
ODYSSEY
•
HOMER



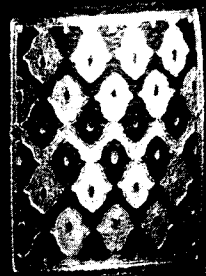
TRANSLATION
BY
POPE



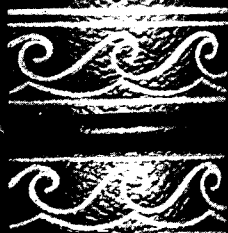
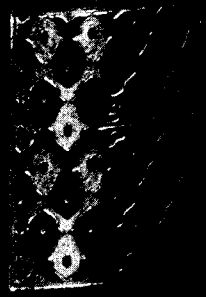
THE POEMS
of
ROBERT
BROWNING



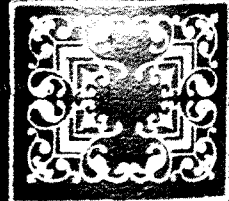
THE
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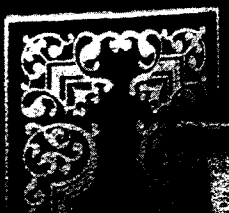


Herman
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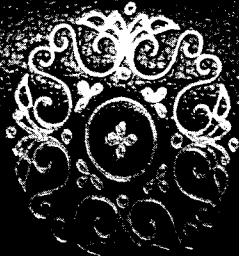


A TALE
OF
TWO
CITIES

CHARLES
DICKENS



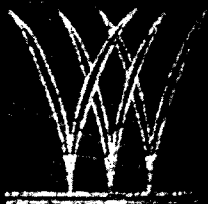
Ivanhoe
by
WALTER
SCOTT



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other in the context of free-market exchange rates, and it is disgraceful that Fingleton did not note this fact.

WILLIAM THOMAS
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Eamonn Fingleton replies:

F. Gerard Adams's story of dysfunctional Japanese politics is the official version I rebutted. He fails to address any of my arguments. To take one example: if farmers really write Japan's amazing land laws, how does Professor Adams explain why the farmers penalize themselves with two separate provisions imposing huge back taxes on any farmland they convert to housing use? As the article made clear, housing costs are exorbitant mainly because crazy building-height laws curb supply while superabundant mortgage funds fan demand.

Professor Adams says a resident of Japan like me should know better. Like many journalists, I came to Japan convinced that the country was open for trade. It took a while to change my mind; it is not a coincidence that I am one of the longest-serving foreign financial journalists in Tokyo.

William Thomas's point about success is for philosophers, not economists. U.S. press reports to the contrary, Japan has not collapsed; the disaster talk, however, has not only blunted Washington's anger on trade but has given Tokyo an excuse for a slow walk on land reform. Today's lower Japanese stock values are still about three times America's; a cheaply built Yokohama maisonette still costs \$2 million; Japanese banks are still among the world's strongest; and GNP grew around 5.5 percent in 1990. Japanese spokesmen sometimes quote research showing that Japan lags in productivity—but this is highly misleading. They present in one index the productivity of both labor and capital. These sums are bent out of shape by Japan's absurd real-estate values.

RUSSIANS AGAINST JEWS

I'm surprised that Nina Tumarkin ("Russians Against Jews," October *Atlantic*) would be "horrified" to learn that "only" a quarter of Boston's residents held anti-Semitic views. My experience in Boston, New York, Paris, London, or any place suggests a much

higher number. Not a day goes by at home that I don't hear some words, innuendo, joke, insinuation, defamation, or subtlety pejorative to Jews, Jewish business, Jewish sports figures, Jewish artists, et cetera. After Jesse Jackson referred to "Hymie-town," for example, I believed him when he said he wasn't being (particularly) anti-Semitic; but I also believe that *fundamental* anti-Semitism is as much a part of his being as kasha and mushrooms are of a Russian's.

E. FLOYD SHERMAN
Encino, Calif.

Re "Russians Against Jews": In his book on the Russian Revolution, Bruce Lincoln indicates that 80 percent of the Cheka—the "avenging arm of the Revolution"—was Jewish, and that they used the Revolution to do what they did (roll people around in barrels studded with nails, and so forth) out of "grief" for what the Jews had suffered earlier.

Though that seems to me to be manifestly absurd (for who grieves by torturing others?), the fact that Jews were engaged in such activities might, just might, be a contributing factor in the sudden upsurge of anti-Semitism.

FATHER ANDREW L. J. JAMES
*Holy Cross Orthodox Church
Athens, Ohio*

Nina Tumarkin replies:

In my article I stated that "if I learned that 'only' a quarter of Boston-area residents held anti-Semitic views, I would be horrified." I did not say I would be surprised. Mr. Sherman's letter is both horrifying and depressing.

Bruce Lincoln's purported estimate that the Cheka was 80 percent Jewish seems to me excessive, considering the significant number of Poles and Letts in that organization. However, Father James correctly underscores a point I did make in my article—that the high proportion of Jews among the Bolsheviks of the revolutionary period might have helped spawn anti-Semitic feelings among anti-Bolshevik elements of the population.

TRANSPLANTS

A fellow chaplain and I are concerned about a statement in Joel Swerdlow and Fred Cate's article "Why

Transplants Don't Happen" (October *Atlantic*) implying that doctors, hospitals, and even chaplains profit from the harvesting of organs, tissue, or bone. This is contrary to our experience.

My friend and I have a total of thirty-five years in hospital chaplaincy. Neither of us has ever heard of a chaplain's profiting from counseling a family about donation.

WILLIAM H. SIMPSON
San Antonio, Texas

Swerdlow and Cate's projection of 25,000 organ donors a year was taken from a single piece of data from the 1970s. While this datum has historical value, recent studies indicate that the actual potential donor pool may be in the range of 10,000 to 15,000 a year.

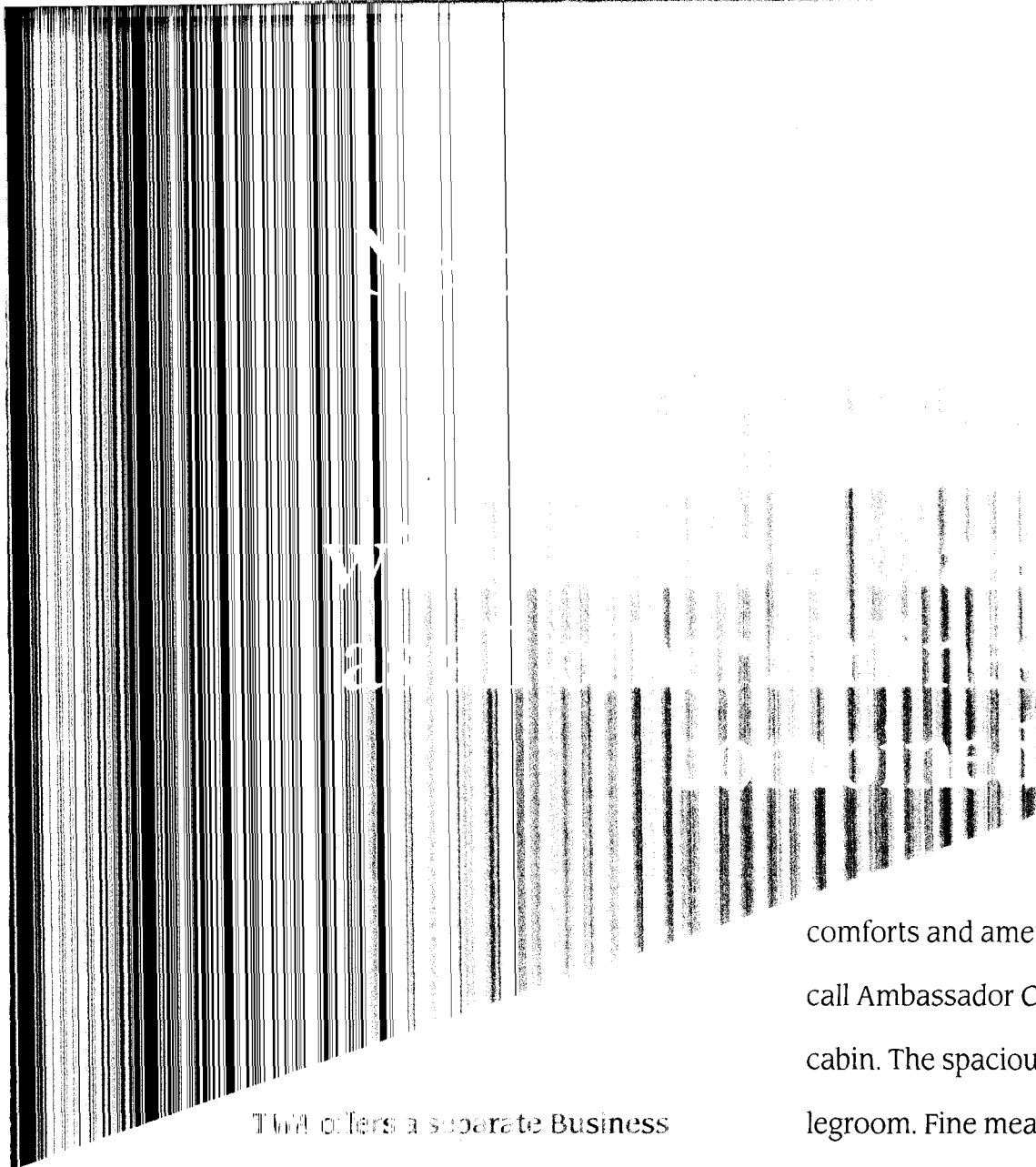
The authors assert that fewer than 45,000 people donate tissue of all kinds each year. This is only a small portion of the 2.2 million people who die annually, many of whom should be potential donors. In actuality, the overwhelming majority of people who die in the United States could not donate transplantable organs or tissues. Unfortunately, no reliable study of significant size has been completed to project accurately the true potential pool of tissue donors. However, such a pool is almost certainly much larger than the 10,000 to 15,000 potential organ donors a year.

JAMES A. CUTLER
*Organ and Tissue Acquisition Center
of Southern California
San Diego, Calif.*

Joel Swerdlow and Fred Cate reply:

William Simpson misread the article. Transplantation professionals—including chaplains—receive salaries for participation in the donation process. Only the donor family is expected to give something for free.

James Cutler's statistics are misleading. A recent study of death records in 149 Pennsylvania hospitals indicates that the organ-donor pool may be 10,000–15,000 nationwide, but 25,000 falls within the official federal estimate. A new procedure permitting the recovery of kidneys from donors whose hearts have stopped beating (rather than only the far smaller number of "brain-dead" donors) makes even these figures too low. Useful tissues for transplantation or biomedical research can be recovered from virtually every person who dies in the United States.



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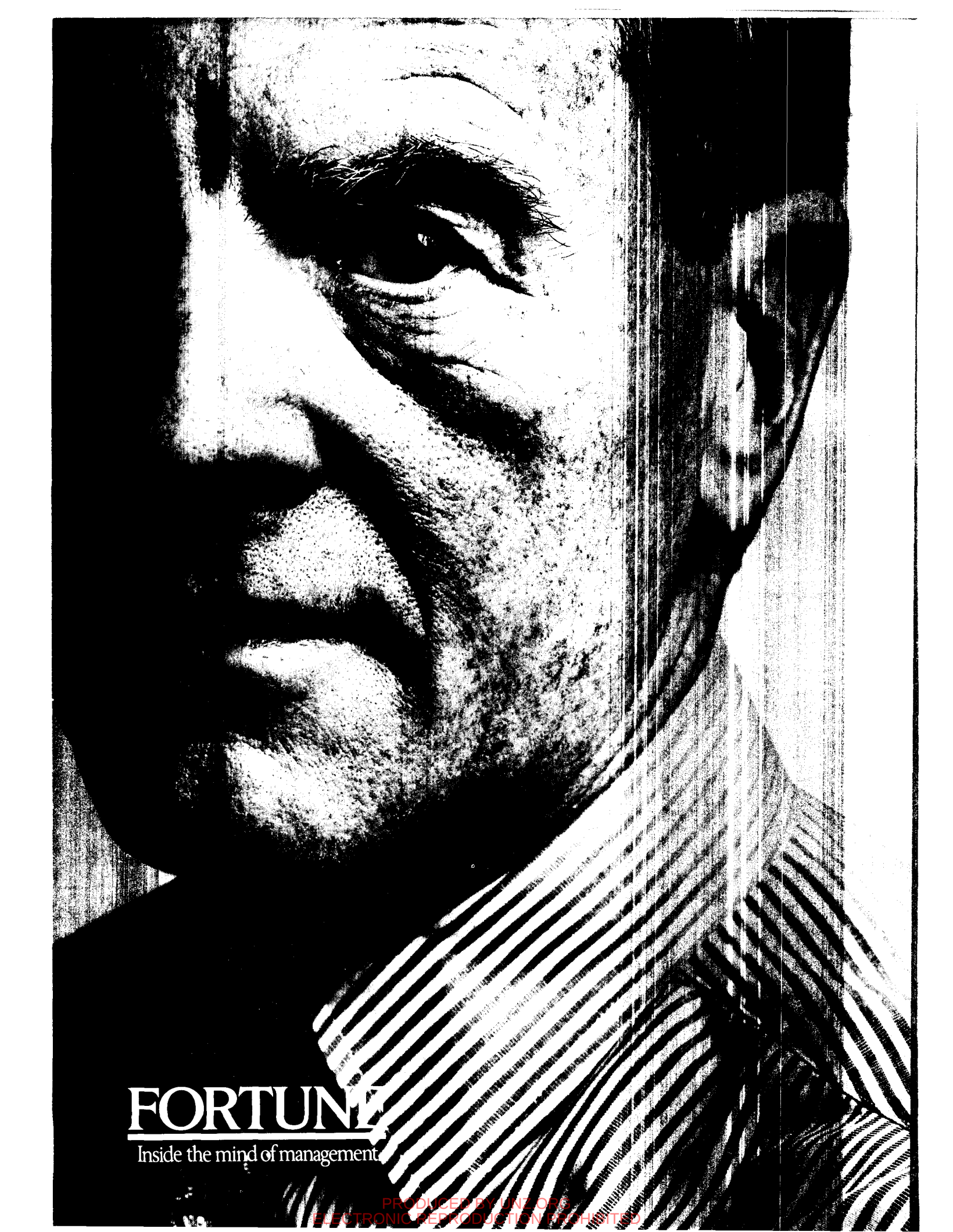
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THE JANUARY ALMANAC



Q & A

Why does television have no Channel 1?

Channel 1 enjoyed a fleeting existence during the early days of television. It was among the channels initially assigned by the Federal Communications Commission for commercial broadcasting, in July of 1941. A choice pick, because signals travel most easily over low frequencies, Channel 1 was awarded in most areas to the first applicant, often NBC; CBS, often the second to apply, typically received Channel 2. With the outbreak of war, however, the spectrum space given to Channel 1 was requisitioned by the U.S. military, and the supplanted stations were given other channels—in many areas, Channel 4. Channel 1 thus passed from existence even before widespread commercial broadcasting had begun. When the manufacture of televisions resumed, after the war, dials were numbered beginning with 2, and CBS found itself possessing unearned, in many regions, the best frequency available.

THE SKIES

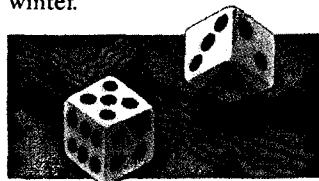
January 1, the second on which this year would normally begin will instead become a leap second, sandwiched between 1990 and 1991. It will be inserted into the nation's master clock, at the U.S. Naval Observatory, to compensate for a slowing of Earth's rotation. 14–15, an annular eclipse of the Sun occurs, visible in southern Australia and New Zealand and crossing the international date line. This



kind of solar eclipse is occurring because Earth is relatively close to the Sun; the Moon, therefore unable to block the Sun out completely, shows a ring around the edge. Also on January 15, a New Moon. 30, Full Moon, also known this month as the Wolf Moon.

HEALTH & SAFETY

January is the coldest month of the year in the United States, on average, with a daily mean temperature (computed using reports from official federal weather stations) of about 35 degrees Fahrenheit. January is also the month that sees the most deaths from exposure to excessive cold. The annual number of these deaths vividly illustrates the extent to which urban homelessness has become a problem in the United States: from 1967 to 1987 the figure almost doubled, from 327 to 631. Most of those dying of exposure are older men; many are alcoholics. The highest rate of death by exposure to cold, though, is to be found in Minnesota, which has a relatively low rate in its cities, among the homeless; but Minnesota does have numerous farmers working outdoors and a severe, five-month-long winter.



GOVERNMENT

January 1, on this day riverboat gambling becomes legal in Illinois. Similar laws allowing riverboat gambling have recently been passed in Iowa and Mississippi. Also on this day the annual salary of members of the U.S. House of Representatives will rise to about \$124,400; the pay increase is coupled with a ban on accepting honoraria for speaking engagements—one of several provisions of a 1989 ethics bill that has been coming into ef-

fect piecemeal. The ethics legislation has been criticized for its broad loopholes. For example, while legislators themselves can no longer accept speaking fees, they can donate such fees to tax-exempt think tanks, foundations, or charitable groups—institutions that may be of their own devising (legislators can derive no direct financial benefit, however). Also, legislators can still accept expense-paid travel and accommodations for speaking engagements, but limits have been placed on the duration of such trips (four days for domestic trips, seven days for foreign ones).



DEMOGRAPHICS

Midwinter brings on the peak of car-washing season; owing to bad weather and the use of salt on icy roads, Americans in much of the country this month will get their cars washed twice as often as they do in summertime. There is, as one might expect, an International Carwash Association—the trade association of the nation's 22,000 car-wash establishments, which together wash 1.8 billion cars a year—and it recommends that cars be professionally washed every 10 days. "We're getting closer to that," an ICA spokesman says. (Dividing 1.8 billion by 144 million, the number of cars in the nation, suggests otherwise.) The ICA points up (as it would) the advantages of driving a clean car: some 90 percent of motorists surveyed, according to a 1987 study by Martin Seidenfeld, a psychologist, reported that they "feel emotionally better" after having their car cleaned. Seidenfeld speculated that the circulation of dust in dirty cars creates an imbalance of positive ions, leading to mild depression.

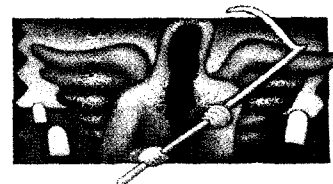


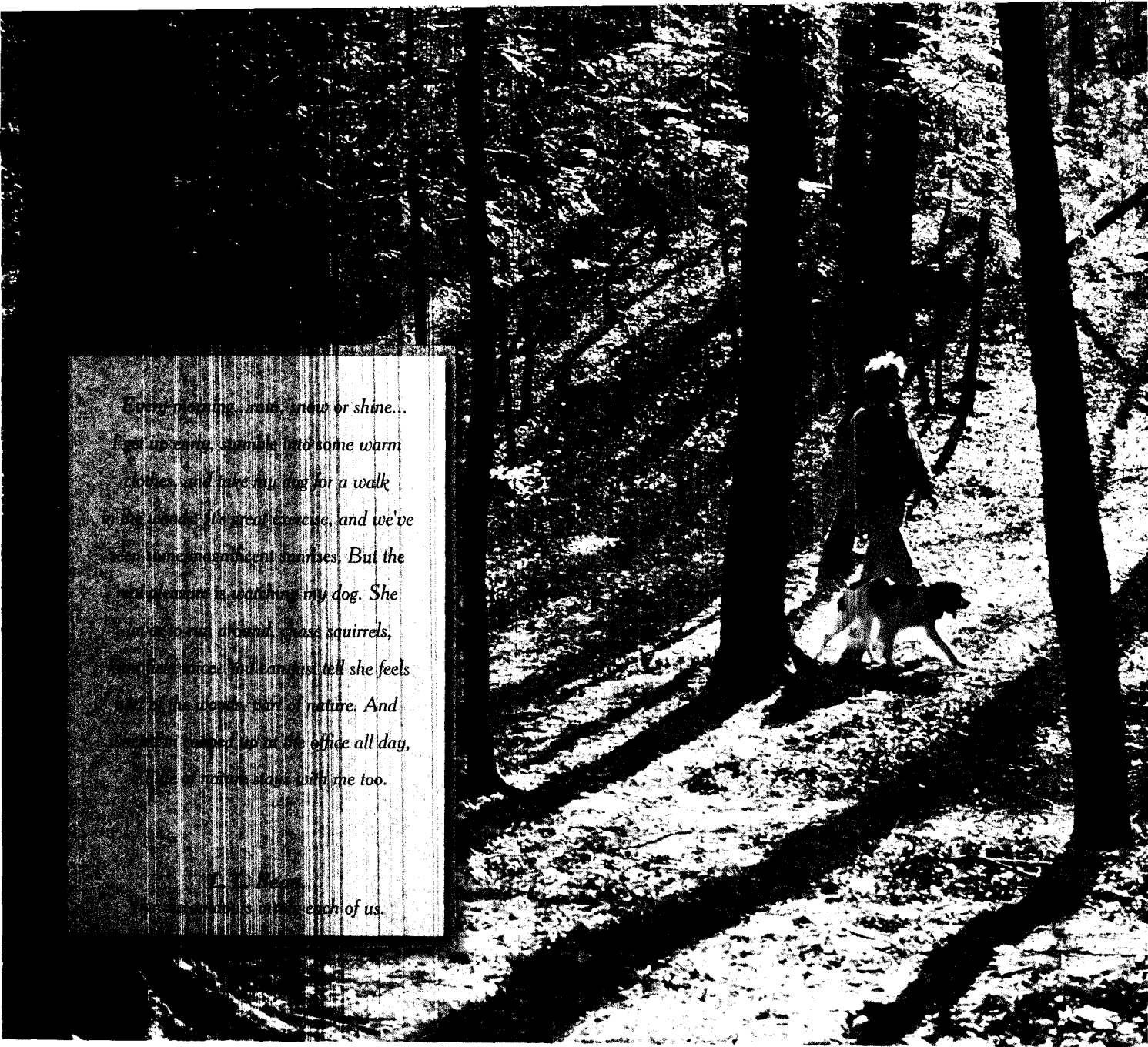
ARTS & LETTERS

January 17–27, Robert Redford's Sundance Institute will host the Sundance Film Festival—the nation's largest gathering of independent filmmakers—in Park City, Utah. 19, presentation of the annual Golden Globe awards, honoring the past year's best in motion pictures and television. January 30–February 2, some 300 cowboy poets will convene in Elko, Nevada, for the Cowboy Poetry Gathering—"the working cowboy's cultural event of the year."

125 YEARS AGO

John Townsend Trowbridge, writing about a visit to the Civil War's Wilderness battlefield, in the January, 1866, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "A cloud passed over the sun: all the scene became sombre, and hushed with a strange brooding stillness, broken only by the noise of twigs crackling under my feet, and the distant growls of thunder. A shadow fell upon my heart also, as from the wing of the Death-Angel, as I wandered through the woods, meditating upon what I saw. Where were the feet that wore those empty shoes? Where was he whose proud waist was buckled in that belt? Some soldier's heart was made happy by that poor, soiled, tattered, illegible letter; . . . some mother's, sister's, wife's, or sweetheart's hand, doubtless, penned it; it is the broken end of a thread which unwinds a whole life-history, could we but follow it rightly. Where is that soldier now?"





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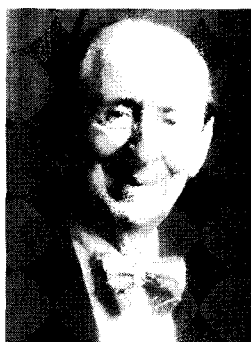
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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

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The difference between expatriates who go back and people who really go back

JOURNALISTS, NO less than athletes, need to keep their reflexes sharp. Certain phrases turn up so often and so formulaically—"breakaway Biafra" twenty years ago, "crisis of the schools" year in and year out—that it helps to be able to type them with only one synaptic burst. After several years' practice my fingers can now produce "dynamic Pacific Rim" with almost no interference from above. But when I notice what my hands are doing, I worry that the language doesn't quite capture the poignance of a dynamism that obliterates some parts of a society's traditions while leaving other parts mysteriously intact.

Last summer my family was in Malaysia again, two years after we had moved away. Suddenly we understood why we had found the place so comfortable. The same period that we thought of as a cheap and luxurious interlude, Malaysians thought of as the Great Crash. The country had grown rich in the years after the Second World War because of its three abun-

dant commodities: rubber, tin, and palm oil. It felt poor in the mid-1980s because the prices of all three collapsed at the same time. No one was starving in Malaysia in those days, at least not anyone we ever saw or heard about. But not many people were prospering, either. Hotels begged for visitors' business. Waiters beckoned you into restaurants as you passed. I learned in those days that any price was negotiable—for an airline ticket, a bottle of pills. Recently I've had to stop myself from saying, "Okay, what's your best price?" when bringing a shirt or a soda to the cashier in an American store.

In our innocence we first thought the country was simply overbuilt, or undercrowded: so many facilities, so few people competing for their use.

We moved into a big old tile-roofed colonial mansion, which would already have become an office block if not for the crash. Two weeks after we arrived, we awoke to find a notice from Dewan Bandaraya, the Kuala Lumpur City Hall, slapped across the front door. Our landlord had defaulted on the mortgage, which should hardly have been a surprise. The rent we paid him couldn't begin to cover the \$4 million he had borrowed on the property, back when he thought he could put a skyscraper on the front lawn. In Malay, Tamil, English, and Chinese the notice invited all comers to bid on the property at a foreclosure auction. On auction day no one showed up, and the Dewan Bandaraya let us stay in our home.

Here in the dynamic Pacific Rim money moves quickly. In two years everything has changed. Rubber is up now. Tin is up. Palm oil is up most of all. Foreign investors have begun to find it crowded in Singapore and Thailand. The elbow room we'd noticed in Malaysia they have noticed too.

Kuala Lumpur has become a boom town. The papers are full of arguments about whether the supply of water or electricity or engineers can keep up with the growth in demand. The school for expatriates' children, which was constantly laying off teachers when we lived in Kuala Lumpur, has sprouted new classrooms. Restaurants are crowded now, to say nothing of the jam-packed roads. Hotels laughed at our attempts to haggle over room rates. The view across the city had formerly



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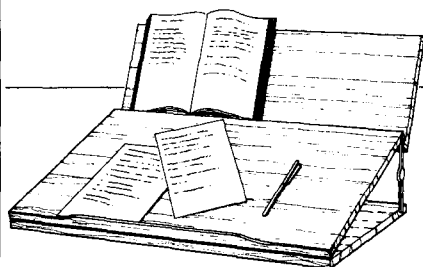
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been obscured on many afternoons by the daily thunderheads. This summer it was blocked by smog as well.

BACK BEFORE it knew there would be a boom, the Malaysian government had tried to induce one, by declaring 1990 to be Visit Malaysia Year. Festivals and gala events were planned for every week of the year—including, for one week last summer, the finals of the Eleventh World Basketball Championships for Women, in Kuala Lumpur. This conjunction of event and venue could never have occurred without government intervention. Malaysians, like Filipinos, are generally much shorter than the populations of great basketball powers—and unlike Filipinos, they do not try to compensate by erecting a basketball court as the central element in every village square. The national sport is *sepak takraw*, a hybrid of volleyball and soccer. (The play is like volleyball, but you use your feet instead of your hands.) The Malaysian women's basketball team, given a host-nation honorary slot among the sixteen international finalists, typically lost by seventy-point margins to the likes of teams from Italy and Brazil. As the victorious teams strolled through town—long-limbed, broad-shouldered, the Africans tall and slender, the Eastern-bloc teams tall and square—Malaysian on-lookers seemed barely able to believe that they and the visitors belonged to the same species. At the Merlin Hotel, where the teams were housed, the bustle of lobby activity instantly ceased when the players came through to ask for keys or change. A bellman stared dumbfounded, suitcases dropping from his hands, at his first encounter with the Yugoslavian team's center, a 240-pound giant who resembled John Lithgow's transsexual tight end in *The World According to Garp*.

One group of Malaysians did manage to take the giant women in stride—which was convenient, since they were sharing the same hotel. These were *orang asli*, aboriginal people of the Malaysian jungle. Linguistically the country honors them. *Orang* means “man” in Malay, and *asli* means “pure” or “original”; therefore the *orang asli* are Malaysia's Original Men. In the wonderfully vivid Malay language an *orang utan* is a “man of the forest.” *Cacat*, pronounced cha-cha, means “broken.”

Above some restrooms in Malaysian airports or office buildings is a drawing of a wheelchair and a sign saying *ORANG CACAT*—“broken man.”

Like other native peoples, from North America to Australia, the *orang asli* have not thrived in the dynamic age. Those who still live in the jungle are often hired by logging companies. Because they know the hills and trees so well, they are expert at felling, and they can earn a pittance cutting down their home. But the government has launched a number of welfare and uplift programs for the *orang asli*, and it brought a group of their chieftains to Kuala Lumpur for a conference last summer and housed them, with the athletes and with my family, at the Merlin Hotel.

Orang asli are typically shorter and slighter than Malaysians in general. They rarely did double takes when they walked past the basketball players; they seemed to view such tall women simply as part of a continuum of oversized strangers, beginning with Kuala Lumpur shopkeepers who stood a full five feet tall. In elevators the *orang asli* would stand pressed into a corner, avoiding the eyes of the women, who in any case were often looking two feet over their heads. Usually a group of *orang asli* would have an elevator to themselves. But in other cases the elevator doors would open, foreign and Malaysian passengers would enter, the *orang asli* would hang back, and the doors would close. The doors would open once again, and close, and reopen—until finally several *orang asli* would approach on tiptoes and leap into the elevator as if springing across a chasm in the wild.

In the evening the women were out at the arena, and the *orang asli* were resting after meetings throughout the day. Although the shock of the new Malaysia must have been more intense for them than for me, they seemed to meet it with great calm. They opened the doors of their hotel rooms and sat in the hall, smoking and chatting through the evening as if in a jungle longhouse. As we walked past the open doors to our room at the end of the hall, we could see that the mattresses had been flung off the beds and placed on the greater security of the floor. Their memories of the days before dynamism were more vivid than mine.

—James Fallows



Liverpool's Anglican cathedral (above); down to a faithful remnant, the Church of England seeks direction

GREAT BRITAIN

Anglican Angst

As the Church of England prepares to consecrate a new Archbishop of Canterbury, its circumstances appear chaotic and forlorn

FOR YEARS THE Church of England has been an essential part of the British landscape. Images of a certain sort of Anglican clergyman are as necessary to our impression of England as cricket, gardens, pubs, high tea, bowler hats, and an inordinate love of animals. The image of the Church as an established and benign presence in Britain is not entirely misleading or entirely a cliché. The Church remains a wealthy and powerful force.

During the past several years, how-

ever, a number of deep rents have appeared in its fabric. The most-publicized controversies have involved the ordination of women, an issue that is about to heat up, for reasons I'll come to. Though women have not been ordained in the Church of England itself, others of the twenty-seven national churches in the worldwide Anglican Communion—of which the English branch is a sort of symbolic Mother Church—have ordained women as priests. Another dispute centers on homosexuality and the ordination of openly gay clergy. Many Anglicans also see the Church as drifting away from traditional Christianity, a phenomenon illustrated most dramatically by certain statements made by David Jenkins, the Bishop of Durham, in which he questioned the importance of the bodily resurrection of Jesus and the virginity of Mary. (Within forty-eight hours of the ceremony in which Jenkins was consecrated Bishop of Durham, at Yorkminster, in the summer of 1984, the beautifully restored cathedral was struck by lightning. Traditionalists took note.) And ever since the 1966 re-

vision of the prayer book that is at the center of the Church's worship, there has been a great deal of dissatisfaction with the state of Anglican liturgy.

Although its members speak affectionately of Anglicanism as "untidy," many of them worry that the current situation is closer to chaos. Some fear schism or mass defections, and it is undeniable that support has steadily eroded. Long ago C. S. Lewis wrote that during his years as an unbeliever, "though I liked clergymen as I liked bears, I had as little wish to be in the church as in the zoo." A growing number of his countrymen have come to feel that way. Despite the Church's established position in English tradition and law, only about 2.3 percent of England's population regularly worships in Anglican churches. The recent controversies and dissatisfactions may cause the faithful remnant to dwindle even further.

The current Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Robert Runcie, will leave his post this month, to be replaced by the Reverend George Carey, the Bishop of Bath and Wells.



As the Church of England's highest ecclesiastical official and the symbolic head of the worldwide Anglican Communion (whose American branch is the Episcopal Church), Runcie has had a role to play in all of the above-mentioned controversies, and his critics are many. In 1987 the author of the preface to *Crockford's Clerical Directory* (a biennial reference book whose preface, always written anonymously, evaluates the condition the Church is in) denounced Runcie as a weak leader who "take[s] the line of least resistance" on any given issue. There was speculation that the attack had been written by Gareth Bennett, a prominent cleric. Bennett denied it. A few days after his denial he was found dead of carbon-monoxide poisoning in his automobile, and his death was ruled a suicide. (The *Spectator* columnist Auberon Waugh suggested that there was reason to believe that Bennett was murdered, a view almost no one else shares.) After Bennett's death those responsible for its publication admitted that he had, in fact, written the *Crockford's* essay. The essay and the at times lurid controversy following its publication were manifestations of the discontent, particularly intense among conservatives, with the current direction of the Church of England and Runcie's leadership of it. One need not look far among any group of Anglicans to find those who believe that the leadership of the Church—not only Runcie and his fellow bishops but the general synod, a 574-member body of bishops, clergy, and laity which influences many aspects of church life—is completely out of touch with the concerns of ordinary churchgoers. One of Runcie's most prominent critics, not surprisingly, was Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who was not amused by the Church's criticism of her conservative social policies. When called upon late last year to select the new Archbishop (subject to the Queen's approval) from two names presented to her by the Crown Appointments Commission, Thatcher picked a man most unlike Robert Runcie.

George Carey, who when he is installed this month will become the 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury, will take charge of a church full of factions. The Church of England is generally considered to be divided into Anglo-Catholic, evangelical, and liberal

wings. The Anglo-Catholics, as their name implies, have stressed the Roman Catholic elements in Anglicanism; Runcie was an Anglo-Catholic, though a moderate one, his views on the ordination of women having shifted from opposition to acceptance. The evangelicals, who are "on the upswing," according to Betty Saunders, a reporter for the British newspaper *Church Times*, see themselves as defenders of traditional morality and the protectors of the Church's Protestant heritage; Carey is a member of this group. Liberals are a bit harder to define. Their detractors would say they believe in any new trend, as long as it is sufficiently leftist and socially conscious. Where the most divisive issues are concerned, however, attitudes often cross the lines of these ideological divisions. Some Anglo-Catholics and evangelicals find themselves allied in supporting the ordination of women, for example, and others find themselves allied in opposing it.

ANGLICAN DIVERSITY is deeply rooted in the Church's history, and has at times been considered one of the Church's strengths. Unlike the other Protestant groups, which originated in the revolt against Roman Catholicism that constituted the Reformation, the Church of England began with a quarrel over jurisdiction, not doctrine. Martin Luther and John Calvin had problems with Catholic dogma, and their theology resulted from an attempt to correct what they saw as Roman distortions of true Christian teaching in the light of Scripture and the teachings of the church fathers. In contrast, the Church of England separated from Rome in 1534 because Henry VIII wanted to marry Anne Boleyn and the Vatican refused to annul his existing marriage. It was the specific authority of bishops in this area of canon law, and the relationship of bishop to sovereign, that opened the breach. Henry had opposed Protestantism, remaining a firm believer in such central features of Catholicism as the seven sacraments, which the Continental Protestants had reinterpreted radically or, in some cases, jettisoned altogether. The doctrines of papal infallibility and unchallengeable papal primacy were not universal among Roman Catholics at the time (the former doctrine was proclaimed in 1870, and

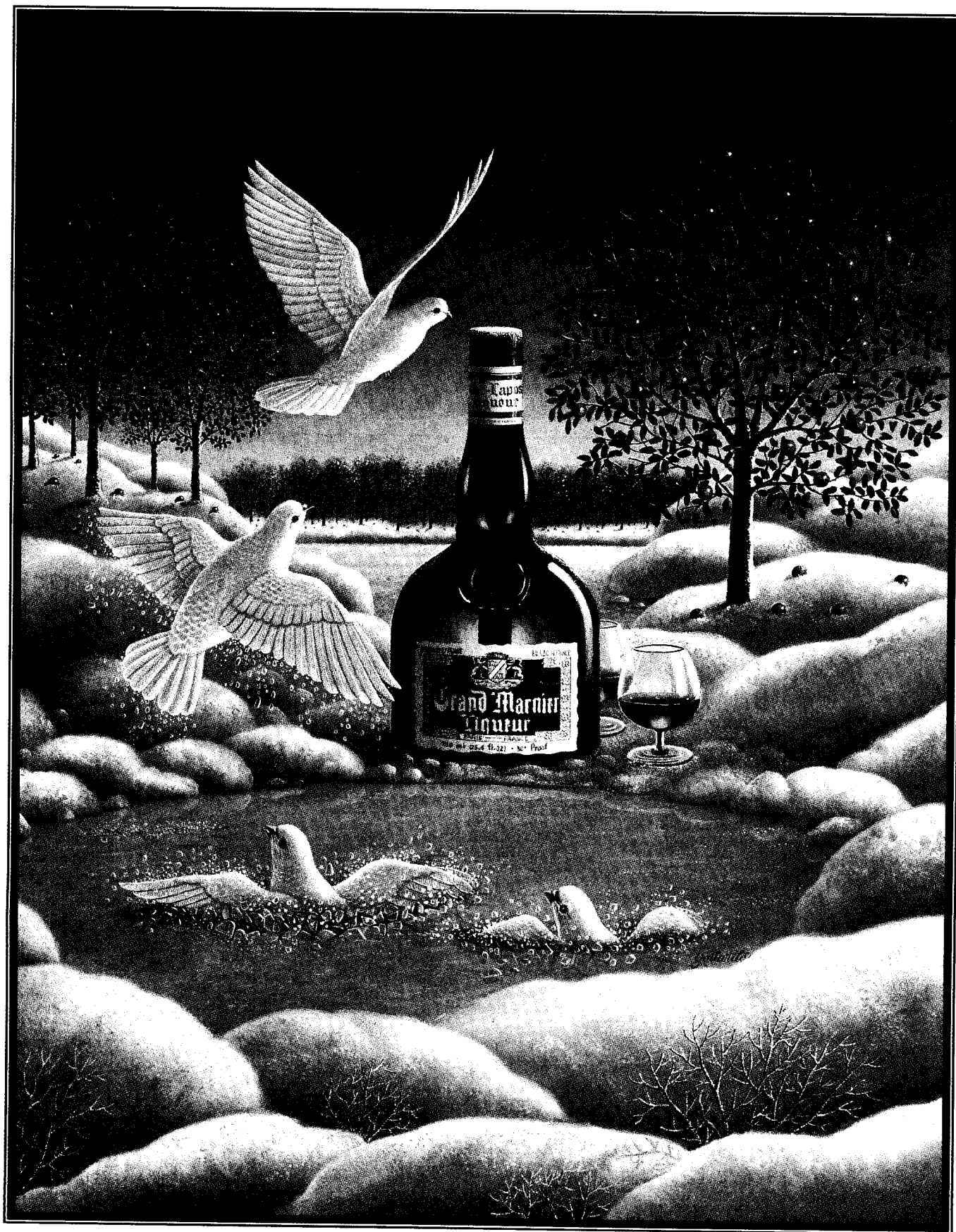
even then was controversial among Catholic intellectuals; the Catholic historian Lord Acton's famous line "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" arose in a debate over papal authority). The issue for Henry was the authority of the bishop of Rome over the bishops of England.

The origin of the Church of England in a jurisdictional rather than a doctrinal dispute has had two persistent consequences. One is the latitude allowed within the Church in the area of religious dogma. The other is the "establishment" of the Church—its official status as England's state religion.

Although Henry had sought to create a kind of nonpapal Catholicism, under his son, Edward VI (who assumed the throne at the age of nine), Anglican reformers introduced various elements favored by Continental Protestants—for example, the removal of statues and other images from churches, the reading of the Gospel in the vernacular, and the sanctioning of married clergy.

During the first years of the Church's history the emphasis in the forms of worship moved back and forth from Catholic (with its traditional vestments, for example) to Protestant (with its simplified services). At the same time, the Church retained the ancient division of the ordained ministry into bishops, priests, and deacons. As a result of this variety at the fountainhead, Anglicans whose beliefs lie at every point along the religious spectrum can claim precedents in Anglican tradition. No one faction is now so clearly in power that the others are eclipsed, and in recent years the chief task of the Archbishop of Canterbury has been to keep a diverse body of believers together in one church.

For centuries the issue that could reliably set many Anglicans against one another was what to do about the Book of Common Prayer. The Book of Common Prayer is, after the King James Bible, the Church of England's greatest gift to the English-speaking world, and it occupies a central place in Anglican worship. The earliest Church of England prayer book was essentially an English-language version of the Catholic missal and breviary. A number of later revisions emphasized Protestant elements, and the version of the Book of Common Prayer finally adopted in 1662 was until this century seen by the evangelical wing as a guarantee of the



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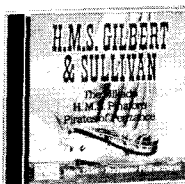
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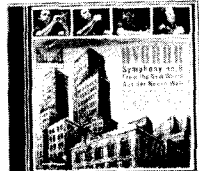
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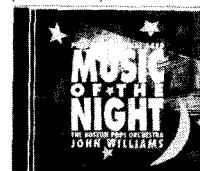
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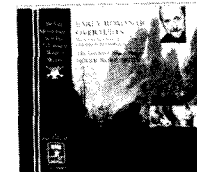
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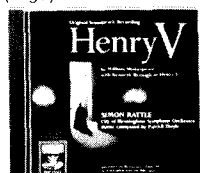
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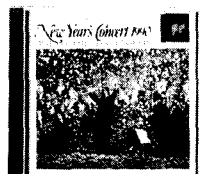
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Church's Protestant nature. The Anglo-Catholics, for their part, never ceased hoping for a prayer book that would emphasize the Catholic character of the Church. Such Catholic ideas as the belief that the weekly Eucharist should be the main liturgical service did gain ground over the years, and by early in this century there was pressure for liturgical reform.

In 1928 a revised version of the Book of Common Prayer was rejected when brought before Parliament for approval. In 1965 Michael Ramsey, then the Archbishop of Canterbury, introduced the Prayer Book (Alternative Services) Measure, which would allow the Church to "experiment" with new forms of worship, with the understanding that if it were formally to adopt a new service book, parliamentary approval would be required. The measure passed, and three experimental prayer books followed. In 1970, on his last day as Archbishop of Canterbury, Ramsey introduced the Worship and Doctrine Measure, which would provide a pro forma guarantee of the place of the Book of Common Prayer—its services would always be available to parishes that chose them—and at the same time would allow experiments to continue. This bill effectively gave the Church wide latitude to do whatever it liked and took Parliament out of the liturgy business—a fact that led opponents of the measure in the House of Commons to say that it amounted to disestablishment (another perennial church topic). The Church, they argued, was established by English law and existed as a result of English law; it should be responsible to the English people as a whole, and one small part of the Church—the general synod—should not have independent authority to revise and experiment at will (no matter what it might say formally about the "place" of the Book of Common Prayer). Despite vocal opposition, the measure passed. Several parliamentary measures have been introduced since then, all centered on the belief that not enough has been done to ensure the integrity of the Book of Common Prayer.

ANOTHER MATTER that may find itself in the hands of Parliament one day soon is, of course, the issue of women's ordination. The Church of Ireland has recently or-

dained women, and the Church of Scotland allows women ordained elsewhere to perform all priestly duties; it is more difficult for the Church of England to ignore the actions of neighboring churches than to ignore those of, say, the Church of Hong Kong and the Church of New Zealand (both of which have ordained women). But to change canon law is a rigorous process, beginning with the individual deaneries and dioceses, where this change is now being considered. Their decision will be taken into account when the matter goes before the general synod—newly inaugurated this past No-



Is this good-bye?

vember—when the synod meets in February of 1992. That doesn't end the matter. If, as many expect, the synod votes in favor of the ordination of women, the measure must still be passed by Parliament and, finally, receive royal assent. According to church sources, the earliest a woman could be ordained would be 1993 or 1994.

To a number of contemporary observers, the disagreement here looks like simply a battle between progressives and conservatives, modern folks and old (and young) fogies. But within the Anglican Communion is the complicating fact of dual Catholic and Protestant traditions—or, as some see it, dueling traditions. From one point of view, the inescapable fact is that women have never been ordained as priests by the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Coptic, Armenian, or Nestorian Church; women have not been ordained, that is to say, by any of the an-

cient churches that claim a priesthood whose historical origins lie with the Apostles themselves (as some evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics also claim for Anglicanism). For the Church of England to ordain women would be not only suddenly to break precedent; it would be also to assume that the only reason the other churches have not done so is sexism. The fact that so many of those who want women ordained are hostile to other elements of traditional religion (to begin with, the whole idea of hierarchy) makes a lot of Anglicans nervous. They have reservations about changing a 2,000-year-old tradition for reasons that seem secular and political. Other Anglicans counter that if the ordination of women is just, and is not contradicted by Scripture or by any sound theology, it should be done even if more-traditional churches find it difficult or impossible to accept. It should be done, they say, because it is the right thing to do.

As it stands, many Anglican churches whose national governing bodies do not accept women as priests will not allow female priests to celebrate the liturgy on their altars. An added complication has now arisen: the Episcopal Church in the United States consecrated Barbara Harris as Suffragan Bishop of Massachusetts in 1989; in New Zealand, Penelope Jamieson was elected Suffragan Bishop of Dunedin last year. Bishops ordain priests and join in the consecration of other bishops. Will those churches whose governing bodies reject the ordination of women accept priests consecrated by female bishops? It is certain that such ordinations will be considered invalid by many Anglicans, which raises the distinct possibility of irreconcilable divisions within the Church.

A great many members of the Church of England find women's issues less troubling than those involving alleged doctrinal and moral drift. Proposals have been made, for example, to ordain actively homosexual clergy. Early last year a confidential church paper on the proper pastoral attitude toward homosexuality was leaked to Grenada Television. It suggested that the Church should recognize that committed sexual relationships of any kind were morally preferable to clandestine, casual sexual encounters. A comparison was made between the Church's



gradual acceptance of contraception and its changing attitude toward homosexuals. The report's general view was that not only tradition but also the actual experience of homosexual couples should be considered pastorally important. Evangelicals in particular were offended by what they learned of the paper, which at this writing has not been officially released. Evangelical clergymen called upon Archbishop Runcie to dissociate himself from the report's suggestion that the Church consider blessing committed homosexual relationships, and he was asked to assure the synod that, given a 1987 resolution condemning "homosexual genital acts," the bishops would not adopt the report as church policy. Though a great many Anglo-Catholics were also upset, the report was less widely attacked in that quarter; it is a well-known fact that there are a fair number of homosexual Anglo-Catholic clergymen. Archbishop Runcie's reaction on finding himself between factions was typically middle-of-the-road. He announced that the paper was only being considered by the bishops, and was not an accepted policy document.

DESPITE THE DEPTH of popular dissatisfaction, the Church of England remains firmly established. The Archbishop of Canterbury will crown the next monarch, who will appoint the Archbishop's successor should the need arise during his reign. The Queen or King remains the Supreme Governor of the Church. The Church belongs to the people, as represented by Parliament and the monarch. The teaching of religion is mandatory in the schools, and the religion that is taught is expected to be Christian (though escape hatches have been built into this law by now, owing to the large number of Muslim and Hindu citizens of Great Britain). There is still a law on the books against blasphemy (which some bishops want to see extended to other religions or abolished altogether). Though establishment is frequently controversial, it is not really expected to be challenged; a serious challenge to establishment would quickly bring the secular business of Parliament to a halt.

But despite the Church's privileged place (and its wealth in real estate), Anglican churches are increasingly empty. If one looks at Britain in terms

of who is actually going to church on Sundays, it turns out to be not a Protestant country but, by a convincing margin, a Catholic one. The growing number of Roman Catholics in Britain is due mainly to immigration from Ireland, but many Anglicans have also begun to look toward Rome. Two years ago the Reverend Paul King, the Anglican vicar of St. Mary Magdalene parish in Oxford, publicly converted to Roman Catholicism; a previous vicar of the same parish had done the same. A group of a hundred Anglicans who call themselves the Congregation of the English Mission have approached Basil Cardinal Hume, the head of the Roman Catholic Church in England, with the idea of forming a group that would maintain its Anglican identity under the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

The Economist suggested last year that Anglican unity should not be as important to the new Archbishop of Canterbury as the re-evangelization of Britain and the revival of his own church. "For that is the issue. The new archbishop's mission is not to Westminster or to Rome, nor yet to the wide world, which has excellent Christians of its own, nor even to his own clergy and congregations. It is to heathen England."

This is more than pious rhetoric. That minuscule percentage of the British population who attend Church of England services is likely to shrink to nothing within the next couple of generations unless the Church manages to appeal, as it plainly does not now, to an increasingly secular culture. The Church may be established in British law, but it is obviously not established in the hearts of English people. A matter like the ordination of women will fade to utter unimportance if there are no longer any congregations. An effort called the Decade of Evangelism—the idea, ironically, came from Pope John Paul II, who suggested it during his visit to Britain in 1983—was launched late last year; it is essentially a grass-roots membership drive by local churches, not an occasion for mass rallies in Wembley Stadium. Perhaps this approach will do some good. Certainly the consecration of George Carey, a member of the strong evangelical wing, sends the message that any comeback attempt will be a serious one.

—John Garvey

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WASHINGTON

The Quiet Drug Revolution

Although the approval of new prescription drugs takes a frustratingly long time, people who are gravely ill can get breakthrough drugs more quickly

WITHOUT FANFARE or legislation the government is orchestrating a quiet revolution in how it regulates new medicines. The revolution is based on the idea that the sicker people are, the more freedom they should have to try drugs that are not yet fully tested. For fifty years government policy has been driven by another idea: the fear that insufficiently tested medicines could cause deaths and injuries. The urgent needs of people infected with HIV, the AIDS virus, and the possibility of meeting them with new drugs have created a compelling countervailing force to the continuing concern with safety. As a result, government rules and practices have begun to change. Each step is controversial. But the shift has already gone far beyond AIDS. New ways are

emerging for very sick people to try some experimental drugs before they are marketed. People with the most serious forms of heart disease, cancer, emphysema, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, diabetes, or other grave illnesses can request such drugs through their doctors and are likelier to get them than they would have been four years ago. "We've been too rigid in not making lifesaving drugs available to people who otherwise face certain death," says Representative Henry Waxman, of California, who heads the subcommittee that considers changes in drug-approval policies. "It's true of AIDS but it's also true of cancer and other life-threatening diseases."

For the first time, desperate patients have become a potent political force for making new medicines available quickly. People with AIDS and their advocates, younger and angrier than most heart-disease or cancer patients, are drawing on two decades of gay activists' success in organizing to get what they want from politicians. At times they found themselves allied with Reagan Administration deregulators, scientists, industry representatives, FDA staff members, and sympathetic members of Congress. They organized their own clinical trials and searched out promising drugs here and abroad. The result is a familiar Washington story: a crisis—AIDS—helped crystallize an informal coalition for reform.

AIDS gave new power to old complaints. As early as the 1970s the drug industry and some independent authorities worried that the Food and Drug Administration's testing requirements were so demanding that new drugs were being unreasonably delayed. Beginning in 1972, several studies indicated that the United States had lost its lead in marketing new medicines and that breakthrough drugs—those that show new promise in treating serious or life-threatening diseases—had come to be available much sooner in other countries. Two high-level commissions urged the early release of breakthrough drugs. So did the Carter Administration, but the legislation it proposed died in Congress. Complaints were compounded by growing concern that "if we didn't streamline policies, red tape would be an obstacle to the development of the biotechnology revolution," as Frank E.

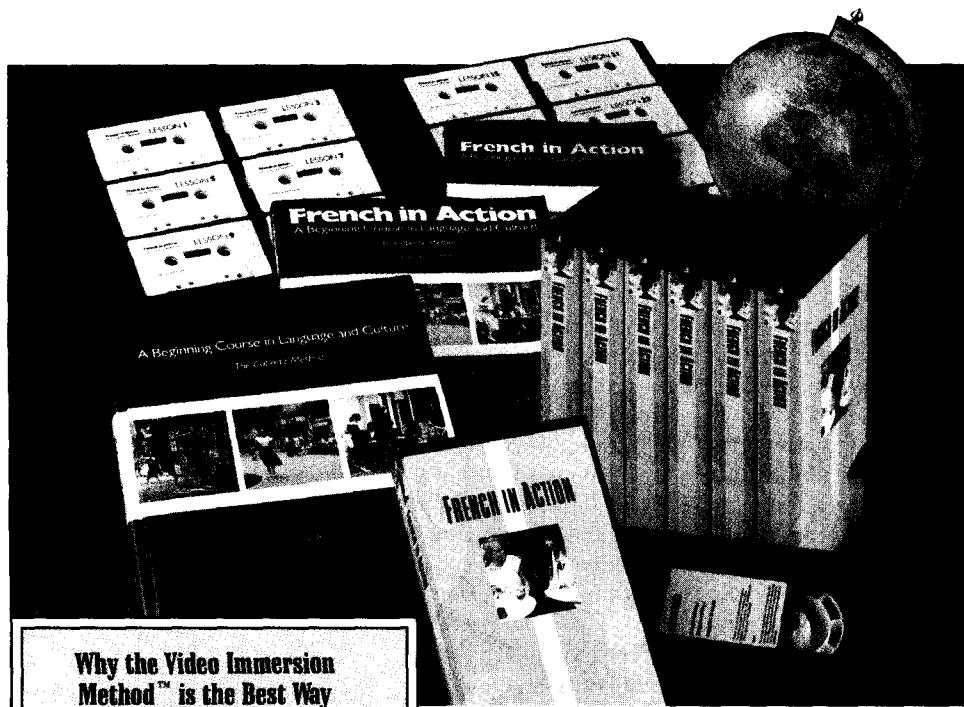
Young, who was the head of the FDA from 1984 to 1989, put it in an interview with me.

Young was a key figure in the overhaul of the FDA's policies. A pioneer in biotechnology and a former dean of the University of Rochester's medical school, he came to Washington with an agenda and headed the agency for five and a half years—longer than anyone else has since the 1960s. Young took the FDA job to help introduce new medicines created by biotechnology—whose promise he had seen in his own gene-cloning lab—and to get experimental medicines to desperately ill people more quickly. He had seen people die waiting for new medicines because "they were in the wrong place at the wrong time," he said. That is now changing.

- In May of 1987 the FDA adopted a new rule that under certain conditions allows people with AIDS and other serious or life-threatening illnesses—including advanced stages of cancer, heart disease, and Alzheimer's disease, severe arthritis, and some forms of diabetes—to buy experimental drugs through their doctors one to three years before the formal approval process for the drug has been completed. Press releases and bulletins to doctors now spread the word months before studies are published. AZT, the first drug effective against the AIDS virus, showed that the idea could work. In the six months before AZT was approved, in March of 1987, it was released to more than 4,000 patients. But AIDS activists remain angry about restrictive conditions on the testing and release of new drugs. First, the FDA must have seen preliminary evidence that the drug is safe and effective. Second, the FDA and drug companies can set limits on who gets it.

Even so, the new rule departs sharply from previous practices. In the 1970s and early 1980s experimental drugs such as beta blockers for heart disease, or cancer drugs, were sometimes available to people who knew how the system worked and had a good doctor at a major medical center. "You had to know somebody who knew about the drug," says Robert Temple, the director of the Office of Drug Evaluation I at the FDA. "We didn't have public press statements and the drug company wasn't allowed to promote." Everyone else had to wait the eight to ten

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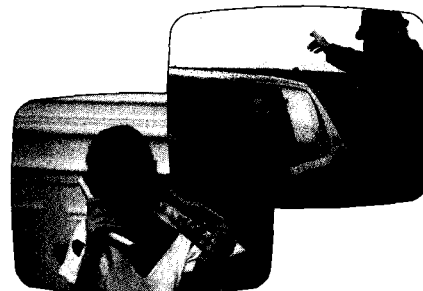
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years that it takes to get a drug from the laboratory to market. Since adoption of the new rule, nineteen experimental medicines, including six for AIDS, six for cancer, two for breathing problems in premature infants, and one for Parkinson's disease, have been released by the FDA and drug companies. Most of the publicity has gone to AIDS drugs. But the number of people with other serious diseases who could benefit is also large. According to FDA estimates, fifty thousand of the premature infants born each year have severe breathing difficulties that can be treated with two experimental drugs made available in 1989. Twenty-one thousand people suffer from advanced colon cancer, for which the experimental drug levamisole was released in May of 1989.

- In October of 1988 another new rule invited companies to request quick approval of their breakthrough drugs in return for a commitment to keep studying the drugs' effects after they are on the market. Early approval would mean less assurance of safety and effectiveness. Young estimated that the eight-year approval process could be cut by a third to a half. "For people who are very sick and a drug that works," he said, "that two or three years could be the difference between life and death."

The new idea here is that drugs can be approved on a sliding scale of safety relative to need. And the new rule lets the FDA do something important that it lacks the legal authority to do: require companies to monitor the effects of drugs once they're on the market. FDA staff members now flag candidate drugs for quick action. But there won't be many quick approvals, because there aren't many breakthrough drugs. The FDA approved twenty-three new medicines in 1989. Only four are considered major advances in treating serious diseases. And the specter of liability—always a powerful force in drug companies' decisions—may make companies cautious about releasing medicines before final testing, which sometimes reveals uncommon side effects.

- Also in 1988 Young said in a speech to AIDS activists that the FDA would not interfere with mail-order shipments of any unapproved drugs from other countries to individuals for their own use. Young's other policy changes re-

flected a rough consensus, but this statement surprised virtually everyone, including the FDA staff, and it still troubles members of Congress, industry leaders, and consumer advocates. Young says that he meant to confirm existing informal practice. But AIDS activists took it as the announcement of a new policy. It inspired them to organize buyers' cooperatives and to import experimental drugs to conduct their own clinical trials.

- In the spring of 1989 Anthony Fauci, of the NIH, suggested a way to release promising AIDS drugs much sooner. After initial safety tests they could be given to patients on a "parallel track" with clinical trials that would show if they worked. The idea came from AIDS activists and won government acceptance with remarkably little controversy. Last May the Department of Health and Human Services not only proposed it as a general policy for AIDS drugs but also asked for comments on extending it to drugs for other life-threatening diseases.

Meanwhile, breaking new ground, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, Fauci, and Young worked out a way to release the experimental AIDS drug ddI after just a year of tests on about a hundred volunteers. The bold move to release ddI after only this testing was accompanied by a choice of conditions. Patients could join a clinical trial if they were well enough and were not on conflicting medications, and if they agreed

to undergo frequent tests and were willing to receive ddI or another promising drug without knowing which. Or they could join the new "expanded-access" program, but only if they could not tolerate AZT and could not join a clinical trial. No one could simply walk into a doctor's office and pick up a prescription for ddI. By last fall 13,000 people were enrolled in the expanded-access program. Another 1,400 were enrolled in clinical trials. Bristol-Myers Squibb is providing the drug free of charge. As with AZT, there are risks. Patients were warned that ddI could cause pancreatic inflammation or painful nerve damage. There might be other, unknown side effects. And critics charged that giving ddI to so many people would both slow the gathering of information about its effectiveness and discourage people from volunteering for clinical trials. As Representative Waxman put it, "If it works, it could revolutionize drug development," but if it fails, it could "cripple AIDS research."

ALL THESE MEASURES represent a break in spirit with existing FDA policies. Congress created the FDA, in 1906, to protect the public against patent medicines for which ludicrously exaggerated claims were made but which were often worthless, if not hazardous. Over the years the agency's powers were gradually expanded. At first the FDA could only prevent mislabeling. Then, in 1938, Congress required companies to test drugs for safety and allowed the government to stop the sale of unsafe drugs. That change came about after elixir sulfanilamide, made with the same chemical used in antifreeze, killed 107 people in two months.

The landmark event in postwar drug regulation was the thalidomide scare. In 1961 thousands of babies in Europe and Canada were born with deformed legs and arms, to mothers who had taken the sedative thalidomide during pregnancy. Although thalidomide was never sold in the United States, it so frightened people that Congress required companies to submit "substantial evidence" from "well-controlled" tests to the FDA, showing the safety and effectiveness of each new prescription medicine before it was sold. From the companies' point of view, this was very different from just notifying the



A poster designed by a group of AIDS activists

agency when sales began that safety testing had been completed.

The next two decades were punctuated by congressional calls for even greater caution. Whenever a new medicine caused unforeseen side effects, it was likely to become the subject of hearings that blamed the FDA and the manufacturer for not being careful enough. Senator Gaylord A. Nelson, of Wisconsin; Senator Edward M. Kennedy, of Massachusetts; Representative L. H. Fountain, of North Carolina; and, most recently, Representative Ted Weiss, of New York, have held dozens of hearings on the hazards of particular drugs. Sometimes the harm was due to sloppy research or poor review. Sometimes it was due to the idiosyncratic reactions of some patients, which could not have been predicted even in the best tests. It was hard for Congress and the public to tell the difference.

There were two problems with the FDA's increasingly cautious approach. The first was that, as a practical matter, all the pressures were in one direction. In 1962 the law was designed simply to stop harmful surprises like thalidomide before they happened. It did not—and still does not—tell the FDA to encourage the development of breakthrough drugs. Over the years the agency became an increasingly rigid gatekeeper.

The second problem was that the 1962 law, at least as it was seen by the public and many congressmen, set an impossible goal: perfectly safe drugs. Eight to ten years of testing and review at a cost of \$60 million to \$80 million sounds like a lot of time and money. But it buys only a qualified promise of safety, limited to what scientists are capable of predicting from giving a drug to a few thousand people for a relatively short time. The people at the FDA "want to miss absolutely nothing in the pre-marketing testing," says Samuel Thier, the president of the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine. "The problem is that there are limitations to what these studies will tell them." Just as no two fingerprints are alike, no two human bodies react in exactly the same way to the invasion of disease or the counterattack of medicines.

And what no system can do well is predict uncommon events. If a medicine causes a deadly reaction in one out of 10,000 people, "you're going to miss



How Phase I of the drug-testing process begins

that and the drug will go into use," Thier says. "That is not a rare side effect if you're going to give it to millions of people. We have a process that doesn't even address that."

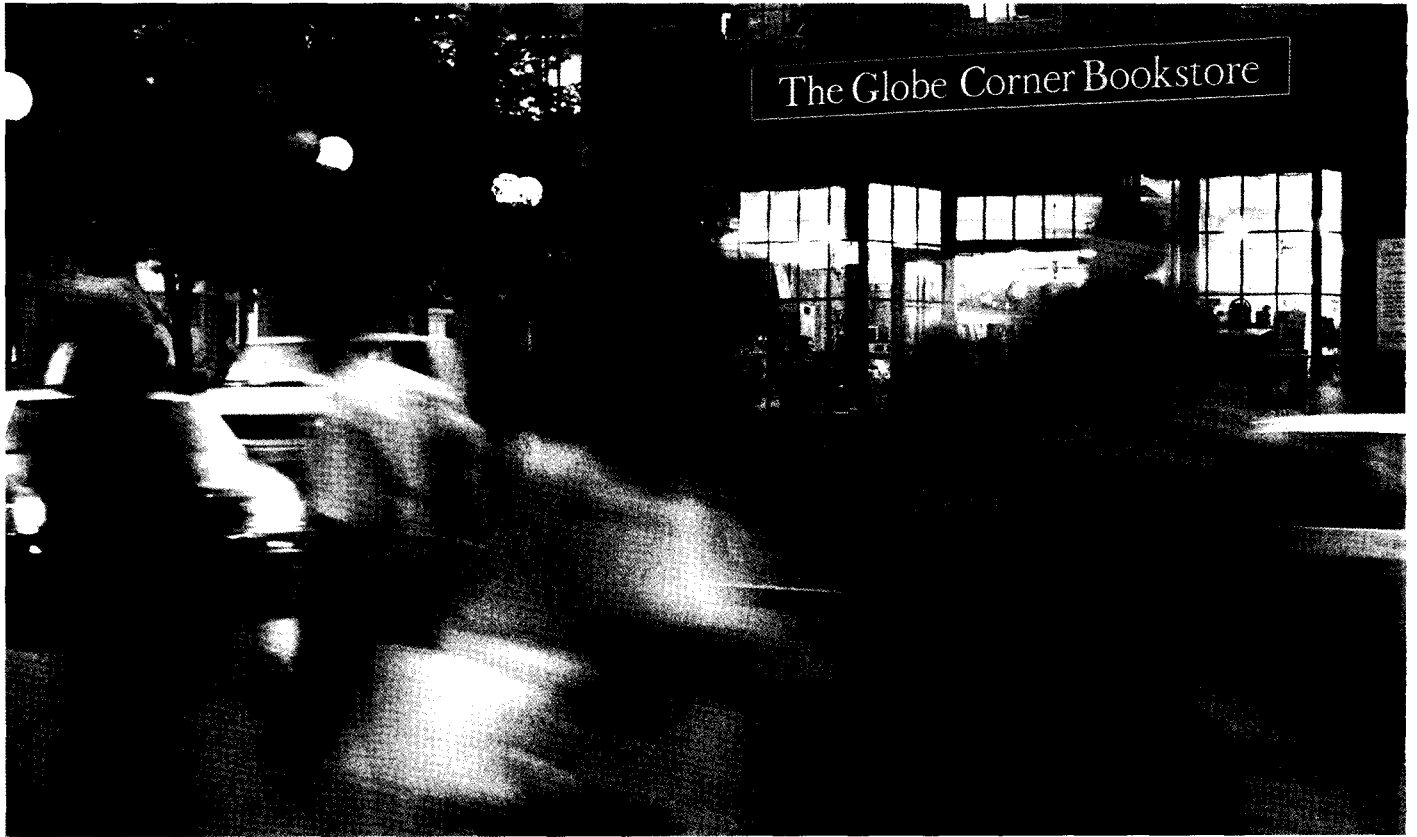
The FDA's testing hurdles—the most rigorous in the world—weed out most unsafe or ineffective drugs. In drug development most good ideas don't work and many cures turn out to be worse than the disease. For every 10,000 new medicines created in the lab, a thousand make it into animal tests, ten end up being promising enough to test in human beings, and one or two will make it to market.

After animal tests convince the FDA that a drug is safe enough for human tests, drug companies design and pay for three phases of clinical trials, required by the FDA and usually run by groups of specialists at university hospitals or other major medical centers. Phase I consists of safety tests, which eliminate almost a third of the candidate drugs. A drug is given to fewer than a hundred healthy people, often recruited through newspaper ads and paid for their participation, in gradually increasing doses, usually for about a month, to see if it can be consumed without being intolerably poisonous. Doctors judge toxicity by monitoring the health of the volunteers while the dosage of the drug is increased. The trials are often ended abruptly when extreme side effects—anemia or liver toxicity, for example—start to appear

at doses too small to fight disease. In Phase II, drugs are given to several hundred sick people for as long as two years, to see if they work and to see if their side effects can be tolerated by people whose bodies are weakened by disease. Another third of the candidate drugs are dropped in this phase. Phase III, which can take three to four years, is long and expensive. It tackles the frustrating problem that drugs that work for a short time don't always work the same way for a long time, and what looks safe today may have harmful long-term effects; it also searches for less common side effects and pinpoints the right dosage. Almost all the drugs that enter Phase III are ultimately approved. The patients who participate in these tests—usually from 1,000 to 4,000 sick people—accept the risk of adverse effects in exchange for the possibility of early access to a breakthrough drug (some receive a placebo or a currently approved medicine). Federal law limits participation to willing volunteers, who must sign informed-consent agreements and who are protected from unacceptable risks by an oversight board at each center.

IF AIDS PATIENTS had not provided a counterweight to the demand for cautious marketing of new medicines, in time the powerful advance of biotechnology almost certainly would have. Biotechnology is one clear example of a large government investment that paid off. The vast and sustained public funding of basic biological research after the Second World War led to new understanding of the molecular progression of disease and the mobilization of the body's natural defenses. Without this advance "we wouldn't have had any idea how to approach AIDS," says Ira Pastan, the chief of the laboratory of molecular biology at the National Cancer Institute, of the NIH. The first genetically engineered drug, human insulin, was approved in 1982 (now more than half the insulin used in this country is produced by genetic engineering), the second, a human growth hormone to treat dwarfism, in 1985. Disease-fighting proteins such as interferons and interleukins followed. So far, eleven genetically engineered medicines and vaccines are in use. More than a hundred are being tested. Last September scientists at the NIH

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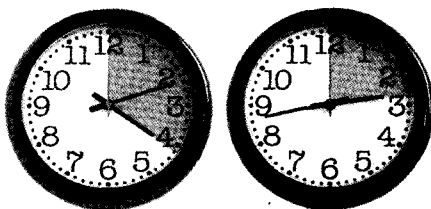
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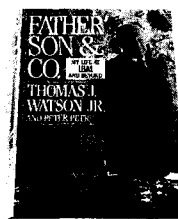
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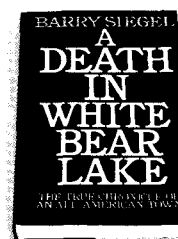
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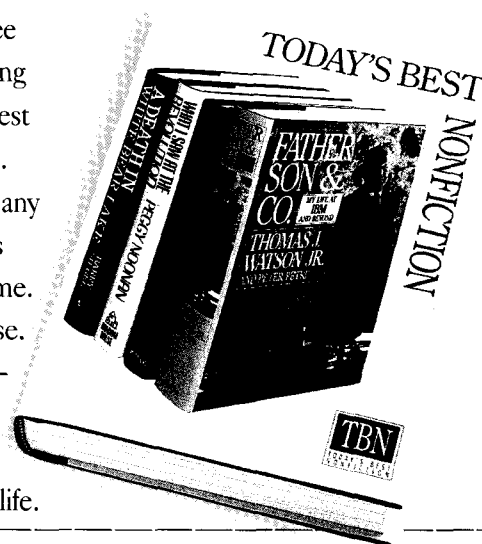


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attempted gene therapy for the first time. They replaced a four-year-old girl's defective gene with a normal one, hoping to strengthen her immune system.

Viruses baffled scientists for decades before biotechnology provided clues to help fight them. Until the mid-1980s there were very few medicines of any kind to treat viruses. Only four had been approved by the FDA. Gradually, scientists found that viruses make people sick by entering healthy cells whose molecular structure fits with their own and giving these cells genetic orders to reproduce the virus. This discovery led to new ideas about how to stop viruses' spread.

Even before the AIDS epidemic struck, and focused worldwide attention on the need to fight viruses, the first step in genetic engineering—to create plentiful synthetic copies of human proteins—won the acceptance of scientists and politicians. By the mid-1980s it was clear that gene splicing in medicine was here to stay. One reason for its wide acceptance is the ground rules set by scientists themselves in the mid-1970s, and included in NIH guidelines, specifying a sliding scale of containment of gene-spliced organisms within the laboratory depending on their degree of risk and forbidding research on changing the inheritance of traits in human beings. Opponents of genetic engineering direct most of their attacks against its use in agriculture, where releasing new organisms into the atmosphere and changing the inheritance of traits are volatile issues. Jeremy Rifkin, the head of the Foundation on Economic Trends and one of the most vocal opponents of genetic engineering in agriculture, does not oppose its use to develop new medicines.

CRISIS-DRIVEN change has aggravated some chronic problems. One is the cost of new drugs. Breakthrough drugs are expensive. Usually insurance companies will not pay for experimental treatments. Medicaid and Medicare generally do not pay for experimental drugs anyway. And doctors at hospitals and clinics that serve the uninsured don't have the time or money to fill out forms or run tests required for experimental medicines. Bristol-Myers Squibb has provided ddI free of charge to more than

14,000 people, but how many companies will be able or willing to do that? New government flexibility does not change the fact that patients' real choices depend on what they can pay for.

Another is FDA resources. "The FDA is getting asked to do more, faster, better, and it simply doesn't have the resources," says Theodore Cooper, the chairman of the Upjohn Company. The agency has about the same number of employees as it did in 1979. Senior reviewers earn less than half as much as they could working for a drug company. A low-paid and leaner staff does not cause corruption. But the generic-drug scandal that has rocked the FDA for the past eighteen months has shown that senior officials need to spend more time minding the store. In the spring of 1989 snooping by a disgruntled manufacturer of generic drugs turned up evidence that at least one FDA reviewer had accepted illegal gratuities to speed approval of a rival's drug; this triggered investigations by Congress and a federal grand jury. A 1984 law had simplified testing requirements for generic drugs; as a result, more manufacturers had entered the race for the large profits that can be won by the first company to market its version when the patent on a successful drug expires. Investigators found that four FDA officials had accepted illegal gratuities and at least two manufacturers had faked test results. The agency tightened its procedures, recalled or suspended more than 110 products, and replaced top officials responsible for reviewing generic drugs.

But the scandal was a sign that the system was cracking under the pressure of multiple crises. "The FDA funnel is the same as it was," says James Burke, who for thirteen years was the chairman of Johnson & Johnson. "I am skeptical that the process has really changed. Breakthrough drugs and AIDS drugs have been speeded up at the expense of other things. What the FDA needs is more good people and better systems." Most people agree that Frank Young made some progress in cutting red tape. But after Young left the agency, for an administrative job in the Department of Health and Human Services, the Bush Administration waited nearly a year before appointing David A. Kessler, then the medical director of the hospital at the Albert Ein-

stein College of Medicine in New York, to succeed him.

Yet another problem is that there is still no reliable way to track most drugs once they are on the market. For fifty years Congress has passed laws that combine meticulous vigilance before marketing with a strange nonchalance about the effects of medicines once they are being sold to millions of people. Congress has never given the FDA authority to require doctors to report bad reactions to treatment, or startlingly good ones; tracking drugs is expensive and doctors don't want to be regulated. The voluntary reporting that does take place is haphazard and often slow. Eventually technology could lend a hand if either government or industry were willing to lead. Large data bases, such as those maintained by HMOs and Medicaid, could be used to track drugs already on the market, linking prescription information with demographic data, hospital admissions, and doctors' reports. At least one initiative in Britain is taking this approach.

If the urgency of AIDS is driving change, the fear of another thalidomide tragedy remains compelling. FDA policy is caught, perhaps permanently, in a conflict between the wish to get new medicines to sick people quickly and the desire to maximize safety. This tension will not—and should not—be resolved decisively in favor of one side or the other. So far the battle of extremes has led to remarkable steps toward greater access, even if those steps are encumbered by weighty conditions to protect safety.

That the FDA is grappling with awkward new issues where caution and impatience are at odds and is coming out somewhere in the middle is a sign that the political process is working pretty well. This typically disorderly way of making policy avoids the greater political dangers of either abdicating government responsibility through deregulation or insisting on safety at all costs. A policy that ignored safety would eventually lead to another event like the thalidomide scare, with its accompanying backlash. A policy that ignored the needs of people who are desperately ill would not only be inhumane; it would be futile. The ingenuity of people told that they are dying has proved stronger than government rules.

—Mary Graham

ARTS

Entertainment
Week

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FILM

by Ella Taylor

Acclaim to Frame

If you see only one film this winter, it ought to be New Zealand director Jane Campion's *An Angel at My Table*. Campion has made an extraordinarily intelligent and sympathetic film based on the autobiography of New Zealand novelist Janet Frame. Originally made as a mini-series for Australian television, *Angel* is worth every one of the 150 minutes it takes to follow the shy, imaginative Frame (played by three endearingly chunky actresses, all with great thatches of wonderful red frizz) through her Depression-era childhood in a rural railway family, eight years in a psychiatric hospital after a wrong diagnosis of schizophre-



An Angel at My Table

nia, and travels in Europe as she began to achieve literary success. A quieter, more conventionally linear film than Campion's critically acclaimed first feature, *Sweetie* (now available on videocassette), *Angel* nonetheless shares with *Sweetie* the director's uncanny knack for showing what families feel like from the inside, without a hint of spurious psychologizing and with more charm, suffering, and whacked-out comedy than you'd believe possible.

C'est si bon!

France scores big among the new year's foreign-language imports. Finally we get to see Jean-Paul Rappeneau's adaptation of Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, (the fifth remake, including the 1950 version with José Ferrer). Gérard Depardieu won Best Actor at Cannes last year for his performance as the ugly, passionate phrasemaker who falls tragically in love with his cousin (Anne Brochet). Superbly subtitled by no less a linguist than Anthony Burgess, this gorgeously

photographed film boasts a special designer for the famous schnoz, which, Cyrano announces, "precedes me by fifteen minutes." (The prolific Depardieu also stars in Peter Weir's *Green Card* [Touchstone], as a Frenchman who marries Andie MacDowell in order to get American citizenship.) Bertrand Tavernier's *Daddy Nostalgia*, a wordy sonata of a film that falls disappointingly flat after his triumphant *Life and Nothing But*, is nonetheless worth seeing for Dirk Bogarde's quietly accomplished comeback performance as a terminally ill man conducting unfinished business with his daughter (Jane Birkin).



Cyrano de Bergerac

The new independent distributor Aries Films, which last year brought us Maurizio Nichetti's splendid *The Icicle Thief*, offers *Docteur Petiot*, a fact-based drama directed by Christian de Chalonge, starring Michel Serrault as the notorious Parisian doctor who, under the pretense of rescuing Jews, killed them for their valuables.



Object of Beauty

Small wonders

In one of the more promising U.S. independent feature releases, Bruce Beresford (*Driving Miss Daisy*) directs Pierce Brosnan in Avenue Pictures' *Mr. Johnson*, a race-relations drama set in Nigeria, based on a Joyce Cary novel. In Avenue's romantic comedy *Object of Beauty*, John Malkovich and Andie MacDowell star as a commodities broker and his girlfriend stuck in a luxurious London hotel without a penny. Dyan Cannon's feature-directing debut, *The End of Innocence* (Skouras), is a semiautobiographical film about the actress's triumph over drug and eating disorders. Cannon directs the film with flair and imagination and a saving wry humor that sets it above the inspirational TV-movies it otherwise resembles.

Irresistible

Among the English-language foreign independents: librettist James Lapine makes his directing debut with *Impromptu*, a sparkingly witty love story spiced with bedroom farce that actually works, about George Sand's monomaniacal pursuit and conquest of Frédéric Chopin. Judy Davis (*My Brilliant Career*) is by turns raffish, intense, and vulnerable as the volatile novelist; Hugh Grant (*Maurice*) makes a comically pitiful but ultimately rescuable Chopin; and Emma Thompson (*Henry V*) is hilarious as the ingenuous, art-besotted duchess at whose country estate they meet.

Slim pickings

After the glut of new releases in December, when studios and independent distributors stuff the theaters with Oscar-nomination qualifiers, January and February seem downright dietetic. Among the meager studio pickings, many open at Christmas. Richard Benjamin directs the improbable but fetching combo of Cher, Bob Hoskins, and Winona Ryder in Orion's *Mermaids*, ominously described as a "feel-good" movie about women coming of age. Fox's *Edward Scissorhands*, directed by Tim Burton (*Batman*), stars Johnny Depp as an inventor's creation who's human except for the sharp metal shears he has for fingers. He's helped by Dianne Wiest playing an Avon lady—honest. In Warner's *Guilty by Suspicion* (directed by Irwin Winkler), Robert De Niro stars as a workaholic filmmaker whose career is threatened by a HUAC investigation. De Niro also plays a man who's unable to speak or move for thirty years and is restored to the world by a doctor (Robin Williams), in Penny Marshall's *Awakenings*, for Columbia. For those who haven't yet tired of gangster movies, there's some improbable genre-splicing in Columbia's *Men of Respect*, an adaptation of Macbeth set in the New York underworld. Directed by William Reilly, it stars John Turturro (*Miller's Crossing*) as Mike Battaglia (get it?), a mobster driven by his ambitious wife to violence, betrayal, and terminal paranoia, whom Turturro plays as an oddly compelling schlemiel.

■ Ella Taylor is chief film critic of L.A. Weekly.

DANCE AND THEATER

by Laura Jacobs and Matthew Gurewitsch



Julie Bocca,
Cheryl Yeager

Changes afoot at ABT

American Ballet Theatre's new director, Jane Hermann, begins to make her mark this season. In place of Mikhail Baryshnikov's epic brooding, a more matriarchal management style presides, and company morale is said to be better. But aesthetics are another question. Already one is restless with this season's offerings: a *Don Quixote* restaged (yawn) by Vladimir Vasiliev and the narrowly imagined, overly sinewy work of Jiri Kylian.

On the upside: ABT's homegrown stars! Amanda McKerron, a match-girl blonde with a matchless technique, was a model of truth and light in *The Sleeping Beauty*, scarily feral in *Giselle*. But she needs a breakthrough role—a character that jolts her into wit. She may have just that when she dances the high-spirited Swanilda in this season's new production of *Coppélia*. Two Tony Award winners, Tony Straiges and Patricia Zipprodt, will design, respectively, the sets and costumes. Julie Kent of the Mona Lisa smile isn't pegged for *Coppélia*, but catch her in anything; a flickering, porcelain presence, she dances always in her own moonlight. ABT's national tour begins in Washington, D.C. (January 15 to 27, 800-444-1324), and travels to Chicago (February 5 to 17, 312-902-1500), Orange County (March 12 to 24, 714-740-2000), and San Francisco (March 26 to April 7, 415-864-6696) before the company comes home to New York (April 22 to June 22, 212-362-6000). —L.J.

Earth, wind, and Taylor

Sunset, *Airs*, *Mercuric Tidings*, *Aureole*: even the titles express the high-oxygen iridescence, the cloud-rolling muscularity of Paul Taylor's modern-dance classics. Add the darker works—the Swiftian satire of *Cloven Kingdom*, the evangelese of *Speaking in Tongues*—and Taylor's sweet meteorology quickens into consciousness. Has human folly ever looked so honed, so sleek? From January 17 to March 2 the company tours the country, performing in Columbus; Pittsburgh; Princeton, New Jersey; Virginia Beach, Virginia; Seattle; Fairbanks; Anchorage; Berkeley; Santa Barbara; Denver; and Toronto. (For more information call 212-431-5562.) —L.J.



The Paul Taylor Dance Company

Spanish gold

Fuente Ovejuna endures. The best-remembered of the 1,800 comedias from the prolific hand of Lope de Vega (two years Shakespeare's senior and the light of Spain's Golden Age), it takes its name from the village where most of the action occurs. By Anglo standards, the play is not well-crafted or even competent. The crackling first scene sets up a plot of rivalry between a high military officer and a younger one who outranks him, but that crisis fizzles. When at length the village's tyrannical governor

attempts a rape of a chaste peasant and is slain, the wobbling action at last finds its course. Who killed him? Under torture, every man, woman, and child gives the same evasive reply: "Fuente Ovejuna!" Thus the village secures a royal pardon.

Two years ago, London's National Theatre created a sensation with an explosive multiracial production of the play in a new translation by Adrian Mitchell. American theaters are now picking it up, most recently the Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger, in Washington, D.C. (February 12 to April 7, 202-546-4000). It should prove an illuminating cross-cultural excursion. —M.G.

To Ibsen's rescue

Something deadly happened to Ibsen in the inflammatory sixties: he became politically correct. Against that setting Jane Fonda transformed Nora in *A Doll's House* from what she is—a stunted soul on the brink of brave self-discovery—into a brittle, smug ideologue. But Fonda was not alone then. Ibsen's fierce art of warring realities—ideals clashing with politics, vision with common-sense—looked like mere propaganda.

We can see him better now. His fascination—his drama—lies less in any issue than in the vanities, passions, and personal resentments that ignite around issues. That point should not be lost on New England when *The Master Builder* comes to the Hartford Stage (January 4 to February 2, 203-527-5151) and *When We Dead Awaken* to the American Repertory Theatre, in Cambridge (February 8 to March 9, 617-547-8300).

Both are allegories of the artist's guilty conscience. Art preys on life, they tell us, and makes false promises for which the artist must pay. Both flirt with melodrama and are tricky to stage. Luckily, Mark Lamos, the artistic director in Hartford, has a graceful hand with symbols. And whatever perils inhere in the private, pictorialist approach of Robert Wilson, who officiates at ART, soap-opera banality is not among them. —M.G.

Misha accomplished

Now that he's over forty and has a bad knee, Mikhail Baryshnikov busies himself with a movie, the promotion of his perfume (Misha), and performances with an eclectic, egalitarian modern-dance group (the White Oak Dance Project). He's in his eclectic years. For a glimpse of where it all began, there's a new video of the 1969 Moscow International Competition of Ballet Artists, *World's Young Ballet* (Kultur). Not only does Misha win a gold medal, but he's pudgy. In *Vestris* he demonstrates the snapped-strings virtuosity of a Paganini, and the split-second bluff and timing a defection requires. —L.J.

■ Laura Jacobs is editor-in-chief of Stagebill. Matthew Gurewitsch, a senior editor at *Connoisseur* magazine, concentrates on the performing arts.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

by Matthew Gurewitsch

Opera for a song

"Concert opera" ought to be a contradiction in terms. Why is it not? The sets and costumes, stage rehearsals and running crews that an opera house requires are prohibitively expensive—that is one reason why not. But there is another: it is in the score, not in the production, that opera's soul resides. In an age that so often elevates trappings above substance, a performance stripped of visual distraction can help tune our ears to what matters.

Eve Queler, the founder and sole conductor of Opera Orchestra of New York, is the country's doyenne of concert opera. For years, critics have praised her for presenting rare repertory with star singers. What a shame that her gifts as an organizer are not matched by her musi-



June Anderson

cianship. Too often her stolid time-beating enervates her projects' whole *raison d'être*. But not always: when there are personalities on the stage who can seize the main chance, she does not get in their way. In 1988, for instance, Gabriela Beňáková and Leonie Rysanek set Carnegie Hall on fire with Janáček's *Jenůfa* (recorded for compact discs on the Bis label; for more on Janáček, see "A master's due," below).

Next month comes Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, with the secure *bel canto* stylist June Anderson as the sleepwalking warbler Amina unjustly accused of a false heart. The match between the star and the role is good; this could be one of Queler's better nights. (Carnegie Hall, February 10; for tickets call 212-247-7800.)

A master's due

Some sixty years after Leoš Janáček's death, there are those who are still apt to count his operas "modern," which is to say not very compelling. But to serious listeners, the distinctive beauty of Janáček's operas is instantly apparent. And now, in America, after decades on the outer fringe, they are catching on. Recently, both of New York's major opera companies have expressed the intention to examine his works in a more systematic, ongoing way than in the past. The New York City Opera began in the fall with an honorable account of *From the House of the Dead*, a series of gripping prison scenes after Dostoyevsky. On February 25, and on seven dates in March, the Metropolitan follows with *Kat'a Kabanova*, featuring the ideal lead (Czech soprano Gabriela Beňáková), the ideal conductor (Janáček specialist Sir Charles Mackerras), and a director who is, appropriately, an acute psychologist (Jonathan Miller).

More a portrait than a drama, *Kat'a Kabanova* sketches in swift scenes the plight of a young wife driven to infidelity and suicide. The score, shot through with Slavic folk melody, catches her jan-

gled nerves and bruised affections in terse, bursting phrases; in a more expansive vein, it paints the contentment of heart she longs for. Most mysteriously, it summons up the majesty of the natural world, embracing all: the forest, the night, the river, all indifferent to human despair, yet to souls that hear its song—ours, not Kat'a's—a source of strange, fathomless consolation.

For tickets call 212-362-6000.

The other kickoff

The year 1991 brings the 200th anniversary of the death of Mozart. As you might imagine, the number of observances held around the world threatens to become rather a lot of a good thing.

Notable among them will be the observance at Lincoln Center, whose



Lincoln Center

eleven constituents have, in unprecedented collaboration, banded together to present the entire Mozart canon. The festivities begin with a live PBS telecast from Avery Fisher Hall at 2 P.M. EST on January 27, Mozart's 235th birthday—and also Superbowl Sunday, which could depress Mozart's ratings. A pity; the program, reproducing one of Mozart's own, is of uncommon historical interest.

It opens with the first three movements of the "Haffner" Symphony and closes, hours later, with that symphony's fourth and final movement. Sandwiched between come four arias, numerous piano pieces, a sinfonia concertante, and two piano concertos—by our standards a gargantuan bill of fare, by the standards of Mozart's day merely a lot.

But duration is hardly the only point of interest. By contemporary lights, it is barbaric to carve up a large work, as is happening with the "Haffner." We revere the whole. Mozart, as we can see, had little such reverence. Extrapolating from the concert to the canon, we may speculate that he would find misplaced the pious labor of resurrecting every last scrap of music he ever wrote. Time has probably not done a bad job sifting wheat from chaff. Still, let us hope for some discoveries.

For the record

Last fall, the nineteen-year-old Soviet pianist Evgeny Kissin gave his Carnegie Hall debut with a recital of surpassing poetic richness and technical polish. BMG Classics recorded it live for RCA Victor Red Seal, and the CD is now in the stores.

Another extraordinary Carnegie Hall event of recent vintage, this one on Deutsche Grammophon (audio and video formats): a rousing concert of spirituals shared by Kathleen Battle and Jessye Norman, both in rare form.

Coming this month from Teldec Classics International are songs from *The Threepenny Opera* featuring the original Berlin cast, plus other hits, by Weill and others, of the same vintage. Lotte Lenya headlines. Cameos by Marlene Dietrich. Sounds irresistible.

■ Matthew Gurewitsch, a senior editor at *Connoisseur magazine*, concentrates on the performing arts.

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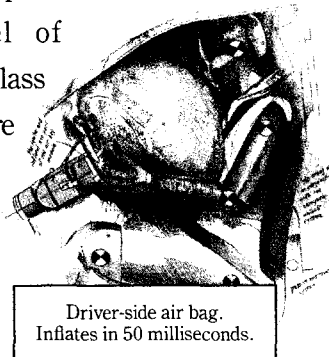
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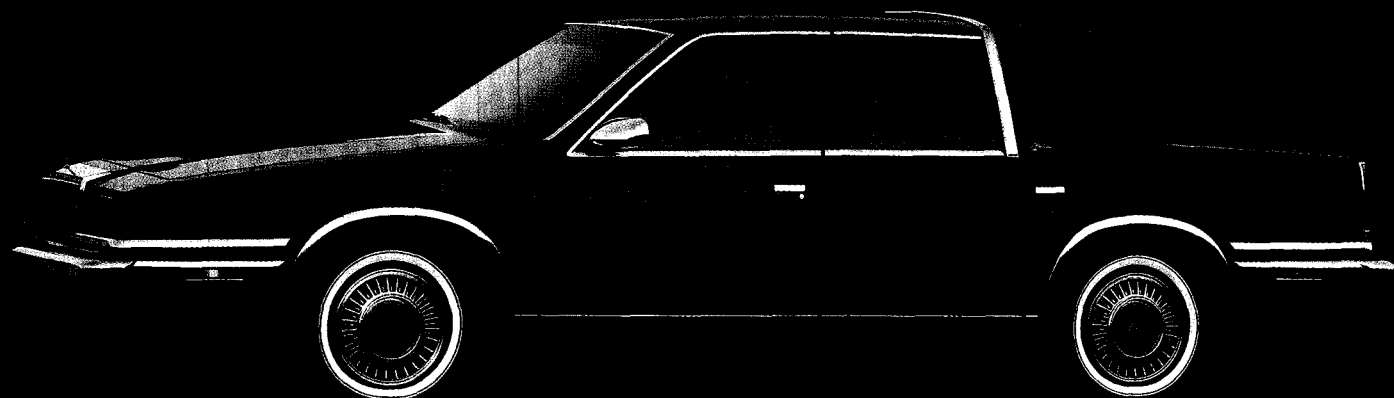
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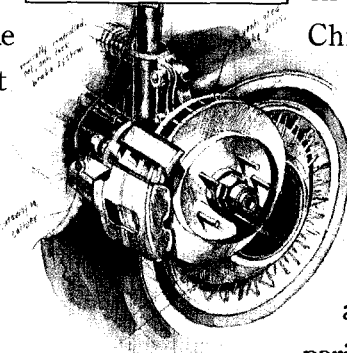


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POPULAR MUSIC AND JAZZ

by Milo Miles

Rich relations

Canadian sisters Kate and Anna McGarrigle and Nashville's Rosanne Cash are veteran singers and songwriters as well as premier cult figures, having recorded outstanding albums since the late 1970s without ever scoring the big audiences they deserve. The McGarrigles' work has been tied to folk, and Cash's to country, but the recently released McGarrigles' *Heartbeats Accelerating* (Private Music) and Cash's *Interiors* (Columbia) are beyond categories, simply bracing new songs for adults everywhere.

Singing in harmony as well as solo, the McGarrigles have been dry-eyed realists who knew the seductions of an occasional romantic spree as they chronicled changes in family, lovers, and society. Curiously, other performers could cover one of their numbers (Linda Ronstadt's version of Anna's "Heart Like a Wheel" is the most famous) without ever approaching the clustered passions and rigorous lyricism of the sisters' own records. In the seven years since their last album, both their voices and their subjects have darkened notably.

On *Heartbeats Accelerating*, the rhythms decelerate (except in "Rainbow Ride," whose rising tempo suggests creeping hysteria) and lives turn into the playthings of inexorable fate, with wrong turns on every side and death crouched at the end. The McGarrigles have always been finely attuned to hardscrabble lives in landscapes with long winters, but *Heartbeats Accelerating* is a test of the soul's endurance, a series of parables spun from a hoard of harsh legends. From the haunting moan of paranoia in "Mother Mother" to the joyless isolation of "I Eat Dinner," the McGarrigles can show you fear in a spoonful of mashed potatoes.

For a long time, Rosanne Cash seemed caught up in awkward efforts to win over noncountry fans: New Wave haircuts, quarter-baked notions about rock accompaniment. Her *Greatest Hits 1979-*



Rosanne Cash

1989 pulled all her poses into a single frame; her originals all fit in fine with songs by the Beatles, Tom Petty, and father Johnny Cash. *Interiors*, however, is not just the culmination of her extended development but the goal C&W performers have been seeking since Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings began shaking up country music, in the mid-seventies. Without a whit of nostalgia, it refills the bundle of cravings and sorrow that exalted country records thirty years ago. If Cash, who could always sound warm, has a new conversational ease in her delivery, perhaps it's because she's never written so many of the songs on an album, or found such deceptively simple language for them. For every pair of ships passing in the night, there's a flash like this: "We're all just like a baby/Frightened and so sad/Feeling beat up by someone who looks like dad." Many heavy blows fall throughout *Interiors*, on both relationships and ideals, but with her restrained and spacious backup giving her room, Cash defines herself for good as a "Real Woman" and defies a life of inert lies in "Paralyzed."

Jazz-master pieces

If a couple of faces had crumbled off Mount Rushmore, the public outcry would be enormous, and yet for many years a similar situation has quietly prevailed in America jazz discography as regards pianist and band leader Jelly Roll Morton and clarinet sage Sidney Bechet. Now RCA has put things right with the sweeping reissues *Jelly Roll Morton Centennial: His Complete Victor Recordings* (a set of five CDs) and *Sidney Bechet: The Victor Sessions, Master Takes* (three CDs). The Morton is more comprehensive, since it includes much of his finest work, particularly his polyphonic masterpieces with the Red Hot Peppers. Still, the Bechet is undeniable if only for his

marvelous consistency. Bechet is the foxy introvert counterpart to Louis Armstrong's unflappable extrovert, both possessed with voices of celestial grace.

Taking another look at the late drum master Art Blakey is the video *Jazz at the Smithsonian: Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers* (Kultur), featuring his last honor-roll class of Messengers, with special emphasis on the very young Wynton and Branford Marsalis. The 1982 set underscores what these budding leaders of neotraditionalist bebop admired in Blakey: ensemble work that's orderly, articulate, and expressive to a fault.

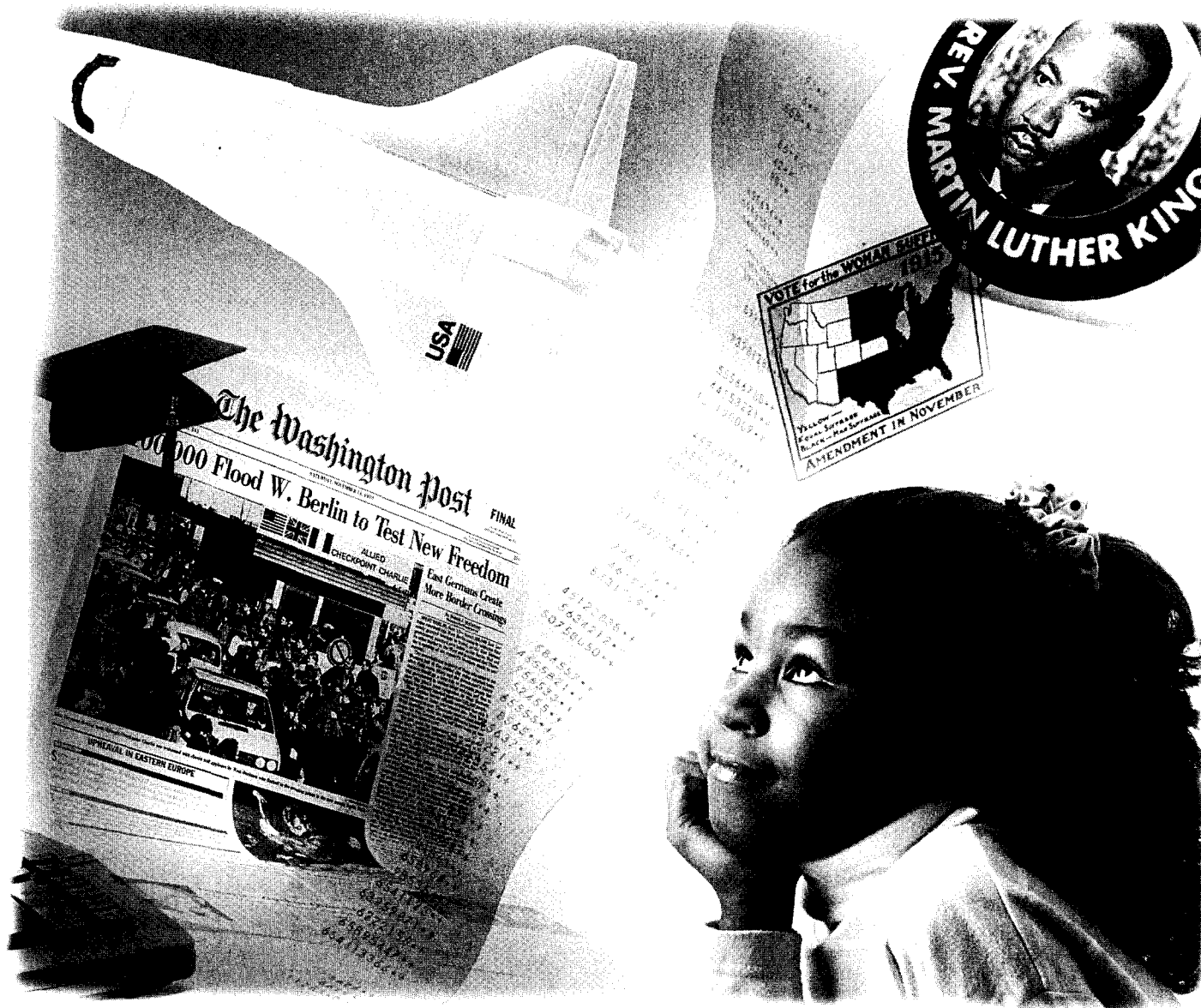
■ Milo Miles comments on world music for National Public Radio's Fresh Air.



TRACKING THE STARS

Chrysler Corporation has provided this Arts & Entertainment Preview; its Plymouth division is a proud sponsor of *The Inside Track With Graham Nash*, a music-interview program broadcast every Friday at 10 P.M. EST on the Arts & Entertainment Network, available on cable systems nationwide. Graham Nash's guests present current work, both live and in the form of music videos, and discuss contemporary issues with the audience. Discussion topics are as diverse as homelessness, the NEA, substance abuse, family stability, and politics. Guests to look forward to in coming weeks include Melissa Etheridge, Kris Kristofferson, Queen Latifah, and Dave Stewart. (The live audience often contains celebrities too.)

Chrysler also sponsors a number of other programs on the Arts & Entertainment Network, including documentaries, the comedy series *An Evening at the Improv*, and *Arts & Entertainment Revue*, which reviews current happenings. Since its inception, in 1984, A&E has received more Awards for Cable Excellence than any other basic cable network, including nominations for the Golden ACE, cable's highest honor.



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For both men books and the written word mattered deeply, and were essential to their greatness—but in substantially different ways. A reflection on the meanings of literacy

WHAT JEFFERSON AND LINCOLN READ

BY DOUGLAS L. WILSON



ROBERT LLEWELLYN

"AN INCESSANT AND OMNIVOROUS READER": SPECTACLES OF JEFFERSON'S DESIGN AT MONTICELLO

A LITTLE-NOTICED ACCOUNT OF HOW ABRAHAM Lincoln rose from obscurity to political greatness calls attention to the term he spent as a congressman in Washington during the 1840s. In a lecture delivered during the Lincoln centennial, in 1909, Hubert Skinner proposed that it was there that Lincoln laid the basis for his later political triumphs by taking advantage of the resources of the Library of Congress to study the great documents and issues of American history. "In Washington," according to Skinner, "Mr. Lincoln had been a puzzle, and a subject of amusement to his fellows. He did not drink, or use to-

bacco, or bet, or swear. It would seem that he must be a very rigid churchman. But no, he did not belong to any church; and he soon became reckoned an 'unbeliever.' How did he occupy his spare time? He was mousing among the books of the old Congressional Library. . . . 'Bah!' said his fellow Congressmen, 'He is a book-worm!'"

Skinner's depiction of Lincoln is undocumented, nor can it be confirmed from what little is known of Lincoln's activities in Washington from December of 1847 to March of 1849. But there is no reason to doubt that he frequented the congressional library, which was directly

across the street from where he lived, and every reason to believe that he found it inviting. Housed in the Capitol in what some regarded as the most beautiful suite of rooms in the city, the Library of Congress was a popular Capitol Hill meeting place, and for a sociable young congressman living most of the time alone in a boarding house, this aspect of the library must have been very appealing. For the research that went into his congressional speeches, the library's resources were clearly indispensable.

One of the things about the congressional library that would have interested Lincoln and that might have prompted him to "mouse" in it more than other congressmen was that a large number of its books had once belonged to one of his earliest heroes—Thomas Jefferson. When British troops burned the Capitol, in 1814, and destroyed the congressional library, Jefferson promptly offered his own magnificent collection as a replacement. The acquisition of Jefferson's 6,700 volumes made for a collection more than double the size of the previous one. Another, more consequential, result was that it dramatically broadened the scope of the Library of Congress and gave rise to the notion that it ought to become a national library.

In Lincoln's day, and until the end of the century, the books were still arranged according to Jefferson's distinctive and ingenious classification system, which was prominently displayed at the beginning of the printed catalogue in use at the time, and the titles therein were still listed in Jefferson's format. In perusing the catalogue Lincoln could easily identify the many books that had once belonged to Jefferson, for they were plainly marked, as explained by a note on the first page: "The Works to which the letter J. is prefixed, were in the Library of the late President Jefferson, when it was purchased by Congress in 1815." In his first year in Congress, Lincoln had an opportunity to vote for the purchase of Jefferson's papers, and if, in researching his speeches, Lincoln carried home Library of Congress books, as he did books from the library of the Supreme Court, in a large bandanna suspended from a stick, some of the books in that bandanna may have once belonged to Thomas Jefferson.

EXAMPLES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S EARLY READING, AT THE LINCOLN BOYHOOD NATIONAL MEMORIAL, IN INDIANA



**LINCOLN'S
COMMITMENT TO
STUDY, WHICH HIS
NEIGHBORS AND
PERHAPS EVEN HIS
FATHER SAW AS
A SPECIES OF
LAZINESS, MAY BE
REGARDED INSTEAD AS
A MANIFESTATION OF
SELF-KNOWLEDGE.**



WILLIAM STRODE

THOMAS JEFFERSON AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN WERE as different as the centuries that fostered them, but the virtue of comparisons is that they tend to throw into relief qualities and characteristics that might otherwise be minimized or escape notice. Books and learning, which constitute the focus of this brief comparison, were important in the lives of both men, and they often figure as important elements in the legends about both, which in some respects are as noteworthy as their lives. In characterizing the transformation of the Lincoln of legend—"Honest Abe becomes Father Abraham; the rail splitter becomes the Savior of the Union; the most comic of our major figures becomes the supremely tragic figure"—the great Jefferson biographer Dumas Malone confessed, "By comparison the Jefferson legend seems rather pale, and one wonders if it can be properly called a legend in the same sense." But the legends are still building. President John F. Kennedy's remark to an assembly of Nobel laureates—that never had so much accumulated knowledge been present in the White House, with the possible exception of when Jefferson dined there alone—has gained enormous currency and is now irrevocably part of the Jefferson legend.

As one would expect, the formative years of Jefferson and Lincoln represent a study in contrasts, for the two men began life at opposite ends of the social and economic spectrum. There are, however, some intriguing parallels. Both men suffered the devastating loss of a parent at an early age. Jefferson's father, an able and active man to whom his son was deeply devoted, died when his son was fourteen, and Thomas was left to the care of his mother. His adolescent misogyny and his subsequent glacial silence on the subject of his mother strongly suggest that their relationship was strained. Conversely, Lincoln suffered the loss of his mother at the age of nine, and while he adored his father's second wife, he seems to have grown increasingly unable to regard his father with affection or perhaps even respect. Both Jefferson and Lincoln had the painful misfortune to experience in their youth the death of a favorite sister. And both were marked for distinction early by being elected to their respective legislatures at the age of twenty-five.

But the differences are great. Jefferson was born into the Virginia gentry. Along with a privileged position in society, he inherited a small fortune in land and slaves. The poverty and obscurity into which Lincoln was born, on the other hand, were nearly complete. His father owned land but had great difficulty holding on to it and finally retreated with his family to southwestern Indiana, which in 1816 was little more than a wilderness, and where Abraham grew up having only the homemade clothes on his back.

In the matter of education the contrasts are equally great. Jefferson received a superb education, even by the standards of his class. It included formal schooling from the age of five, expert instruction in classical languages,

two years of college, and a legal apprenticeship. Along the way he had the benefit of conspicuously learned men as his teachers—the Reverend James Maury, Dr. William Small, and George Wythe—in addition to a seat at the table of the cultivated governor of Virginia, Francis Fauquier. Lincoln had almost no formal education. Growing up with nearly illiterate parents and in an atmosphere that had, as he wrote, "nothing to excite ambition for education," Lincoln was essentially self-taught. The backwoods schools he attended very sporadically were conducted by teachers with meager qualifications. "If a straggler supposed to understand latin, happened to sojourn in the neighborhood," Lincoln wrote, "he was looked upon as a wizzard." Jefferson read Latin from an early age and, after mastering classical languages and French, was able to teach himself Italian; Lincoln at about the same age was teaching himself grammar in order to be able to speak and write standard English.

However different in their educational opportunities, both Jefferson and Lincoln as young men became known to their contemporaries as "hard students." Jefferson was remembered as always preparing his lessons before joining in the games of his schoolmates and as carrying his Greek grammar with him wherever he went. He is reputed to have studied fifteen hours a day at college, and his classmate John Page said that Jefferson could "tear himself away from his dearest friends, to fly to his studies." Upon deciding to practice law, he studied for nearly three years before taking his bar examination (others might spend only a few months) and then put in an additional year of study, making extensive extracts from law reports and legal treatises before taking his first case. Jefferson also followed this eighteenth-century practice of "commonplacing"—which resulted in an accumulation of extracts, called a commonplace book—in his literary and philosophical reading.

Lincoln was remembered by those he grew up with as an exceptionally studious boy who "read everything he could get his hands on." His family testified that in his adolescent years he was constantly reading and making notes on what he read, even when he had no paper and had to write on boards. His stepmother recalled that he would wrestle tenaciously with words, passages, and ideas he didn't understand. When he went out on his own, his absorption in his studies was a source of astonishment to his neighbors at New Salem, where, in addition to studying history and biography, he immersed himself in technical books on grammar, surveying, and the law. His legal studies grew so intensive that his friends feared for his health, and when he became temporarily deranged after the death of Ann Rutledge, whom he probably would have married, some thought the cause must be excessive application to his studies.

A comparison of the earliest reading of Jefferson and Lincoln is instructive. The legend in Jefferson's family is that he had read all the books in his father's library by the

time he was five. The inventory of that library which was made nine years later, when Peter Jefferson died, shows about two dozen titles, consisting of a Bible, a dictionary, and books on Virginia law, with an admixture of political and literary standards, such as Rapin's *History of England* and *The Spectator*. The earliest entries in the literary commonplace book the young Jefferson kept are Latin excerpts from Horace, Virgil, Cicero, and Ovid. These and excerpts from Pope, Milton, and Shakespeare date from his teens and suggest that he was being introduced systematically to the standard classical and English writers.

Lincoln's first book was undoubtedly the Bible, one of the very few books in the Lincoln home. Apart from the school books to which he was introduced, such as *Dilworth's Spelling-Book*, Lincoln's earliest reading was largely confined to what he could borrow from his neighbors. Like Jefferson, he kept a notebook of his early readings, but unfortunately it has not survived. His Indiana acquaintances agreed that he read and re-read all the books he could get hold of, which, given the primitive character of the neighborhood, were not many. They seem to have included Aesop's *Fables*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, James Riley's *Narrative*, a life of Franklin, and lives of Washington by Mason Weems and David Ramsay. The early reading of Jefferson and Lincoln reflects the differences in their circumstances and may provide clues to the incipient genius of each. But what is perhaps most striking is that as boys and young men, both seized all available opportunities for reading.

JEFFERSON AND LINCOLN MUST BE JUDGED EQUAL IN the dedication and effort they brought to their youthful studies. They appear to have been equally disciplined and equally determined to achieve their objectives through reading and study, but those objectives were markedly different. Jefferson set out to become a learned man. From an early age he aspired to the eighteenth-century ideal of the *philosophe*, the universally informed philosopher, whose knowledge was built on a classical base and whose efforts were committed to reason and the pursuit of objective truth. Jefferson's intellectual endeavors were a source of personal pleasure, and although he felt obligated to steer them in a useful direction, they clearly yielded satisfaction as ends in themselves. He often said that he was ill-suited by nature for politics and would have followed a life of study but for the accident of the times he lived in.

Lincoln must have been motivated in part by an intelligent backwoods boy's curiosity about the great world beyond, but his consuming ambition was to rise. The poverty into which he was born entailed a life of manual labor, the unremitting regimen of the ax and the plow. Lincoln's commitment to study, which his neighbors and perhaps even his father saw as a species of laziness, may be regarded instead as a manifestation of self-knowledge. Even as a boy he recognized and began to indulge his differentness, and by the time he was a young man his distinctive ways had set him apart. The character that Skinner says was remarked by his fellow congressmen twenty years later—his abstinence from liquor, tobacco, and profanity—was already in evidence in his youth, and if it was unusual for a politician in Washington, it was almost unheard of on the mid-western frontier.

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Springfield, Ill., Sep. 25. 1860
 J. Mr. Brockman, Esq.
 Dear Sir
 Yours of the 24th asking
 "the best mode of obtaining a thorough knowledge of the law" is received. The mode is very simple, though laborious, and tedious—it is only to get the books, and read, and study them carefully. Begin with Blackstone's Commentaries, and after reading it carefully, though, say twice, take up Whittier's Pleadings, Greenleaf's Evidence, & Story's Equity &c. in succession. Work, work, work, is the main thing.
 Yours very truly
 A. Lincoln

A LETTER OF ADVICE FROM LINCOLN THE LAWYER

The young Lincoln became an avid reader of newspapers as well as books. His stepmother remembered that in the period from 1827 to 1830 he was "a constant reader of them," and these highly partisan sheets no doubt sharpened his interest in politics. One of his friends in Indiana remembered that this was about the time he broke rank with most of his friends and neighbors and proclaimed himself an anti-Jackson man. Another remembered lending Lincoln a newspaper containing an editorial on Thomas Jefferson, which Lincoln could later repeat word for word. Thus Louis A. Warren's suggestion that the editorial may date from the time of Jefferson's

death, on the Fourth of July, 1826, takes on added interest, for Lincoln insisted repeatedly in later life that his politics derived from the Declaration of Independence.

But Lincoln's legendary feats of reading, book-borrowing, and diligent study belonged only to his youth and early manhood. Once established as a successful legislator and licensed to practice law, Lincoln put his days as a hard student behind him. Thereafter he seems to have done little more in the way of serious reading than his professional and political interests required. His law partner, William H. Herndon, who was himself an avid reader with a good library, said emphatically that Lincoln read little. Philosophical and reflective as he undoubtedly was, the mature Lincoln contented himself with newspapers and brief forays into Herndon's scientific and philosophical books, rarely reading one all the way through. Lincoln "read less and thought more than any man in his sphere in America," was the way Herndon phrased it. "No man can put his finger on any great book written in the last or present century that Lincoln ever read."

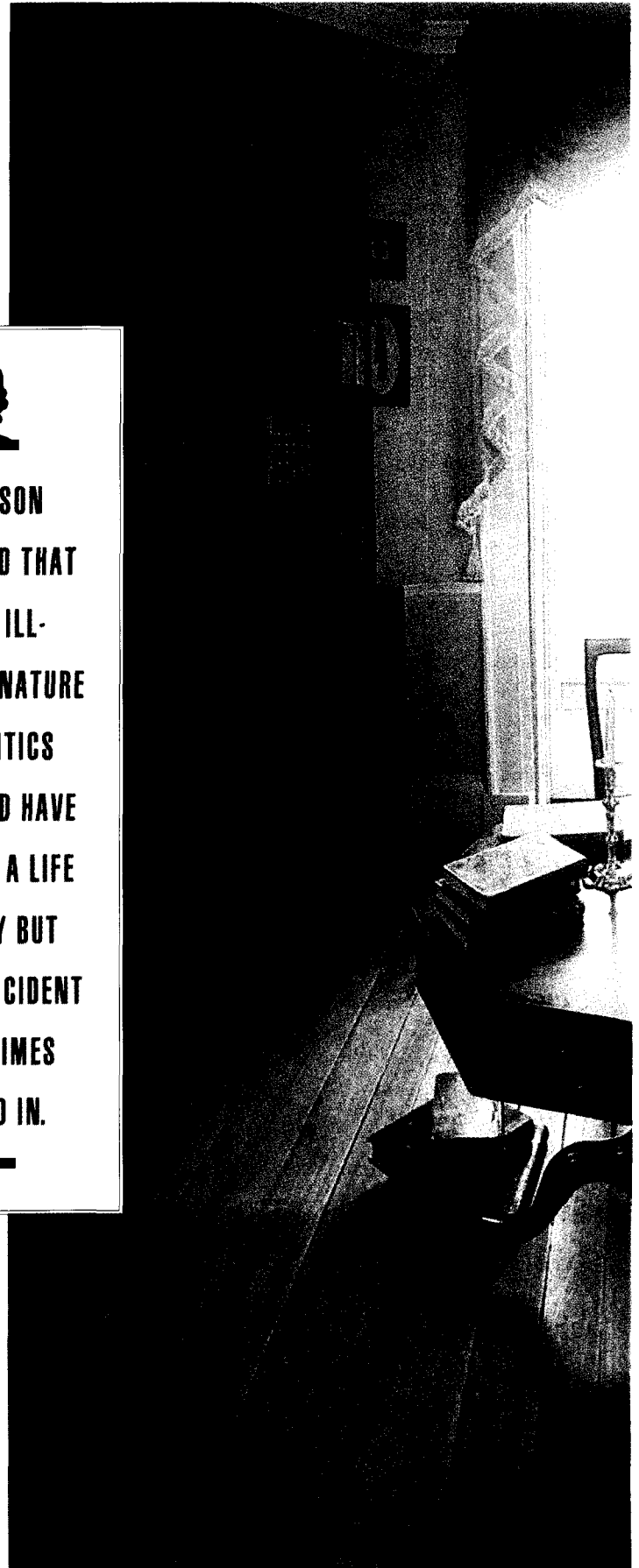
He could still set himself to a particular task that required disciplined reading, as when he undertook to master the six books of Euclid. Robert Lincoln remembered his father's studious attention to Euclid, as did some fellow lawyers on the circuit, and Lincoln himself was sufficiently proud of this achievement to point it out in an autobiographical statement. He still relished poetry, which had early been a favorite recreation. It seemed to some of his friends that he could recite all of Burns by heart, and his marked fondness for recitation may indicate that he preferred this to private reading. In fact, much to the annoyance of his law partner, Lincoln did his office reading aloud, claiming that both hearing and seeing the words reinforced his grasp of the material. If there was an exception to his lapse from intensive study in his maturity, it was Shakespeare. "When he was young he read the Bible," Herndon said, "and when of age he read Shakespeare. This latter book was scarcely ever out of his mind and his hands."

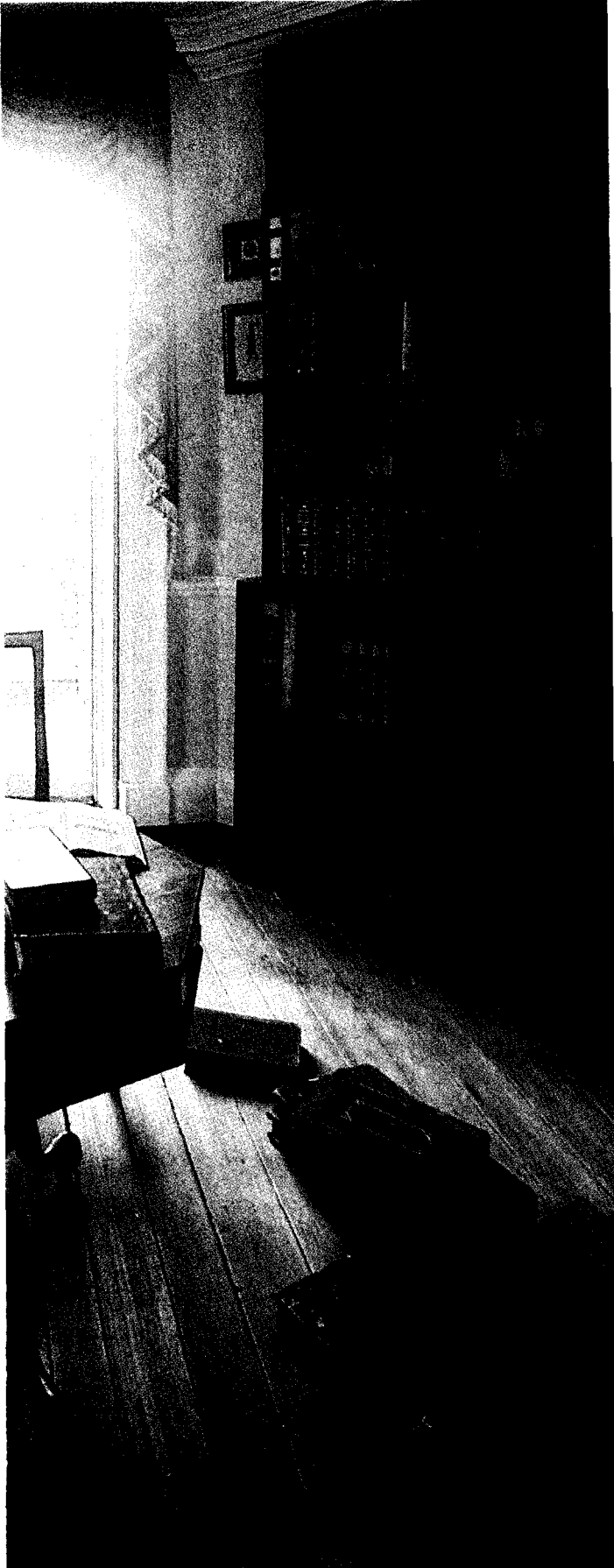
Jefferson, in contrast, remained a hard student all his life. What became legendary with him was the incredible range and depth of his knowledge, something that impressed not only his friends and fellow Americans



**JEFFERSON
OFTEN SAID THAT
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HE LIVED IN.**

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S LIBRARY AT MONTICELLO, WHOSE
VOLUMES FORMED THE BASIS OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS





ROBERT LEWELLYN

but sophisticated Europeans as well. As one might expect, nearly all of Jefferson's great learning was gleaned through diligent reading and study. He believed there was no substitute for research, no matter how tedious. "A patient pursuit of facts, and cautious combination and comparison of them," he wrote in a footnote to *Notes on Virginia*, "is the drudgery to which man is subjected by his Maker, if he wishes to attain sure knowledge." Books were the indispensable tools of his work, whether as lawyer, architect, farmer, legislator, or revolutionary statesman. Merely the books referred to and discussed in his famous correspondence with John Adams would establish Jefferson's credentials as an incessant and omnivorous reader, but his general correspondence and other writings present unmistakable evidence of a habitual recurrence to books. Isaac Jefferson, who grew up as a slave at Monticello, remembered his master in the characteristic act of poring over books spread out on the floor of his library and said that whenever someone asked him a question, "he go right straight to the book and tell you all about it."

Both Jefferson and Lincoln were lawyers, and both readied themselves for the law by a course of intensive reading and study. But once admitted to the bar, they diverged. When Jefferson's law books were destroyed by fire, in 1770, he wrote to his friends in despair, for he believed he could not represent his clients without books. And, indeed, his surviving opinions show frequent reference to the printed case law and other legal authorities and suggest that his great strength as a lawyer was his legal knowledge. Lincoln was not known for his legal scholarship but was unexcelled as an advocate in jury trials. In this context, it is interesting that, in legend, Lincoln is given credit for saving Duff Armstrong, the son of his old friends Jack and Hannah Armstrong, from a murder conviction by the shrewd use of a book—an almanac, which showed that certain testimony about the moonlight was questionable. But a close look at this case indicates that it was Lincoln's highly personal and strongly emotional appeal to the jurors, which reduced everyone in the courtroom to tears, rather than the impugning of the moonlight testimony, that carried the day. One is reminded here of Edmund Randolph's famous comparison of the legal talents of Jefferson and Patrick Henry: "Mr. Jefferson drew copiously from the depths of the law, Mr. Henry from the recesses of the human heart."

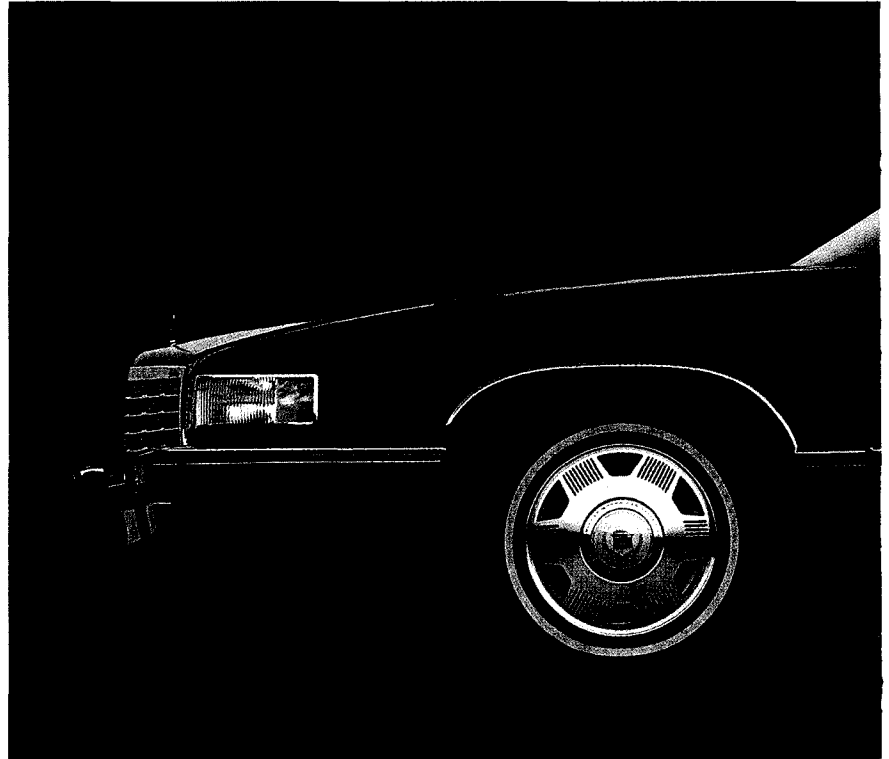
TELLING STORIES AND READING THE WORKS OF HUMORISTS to his Cabinet are part of the Lincoln legend, and yet one of the truly remarkable things about Lincoln as President is the extent to which he resorted to literature. Perhaps no President turned to English poetry while in office with the frequency that Lincoln did. He continued to recite his old favorites, such as "O Why Should the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud!" and Holmes's "The Last Leaf," their melancholy and brood-

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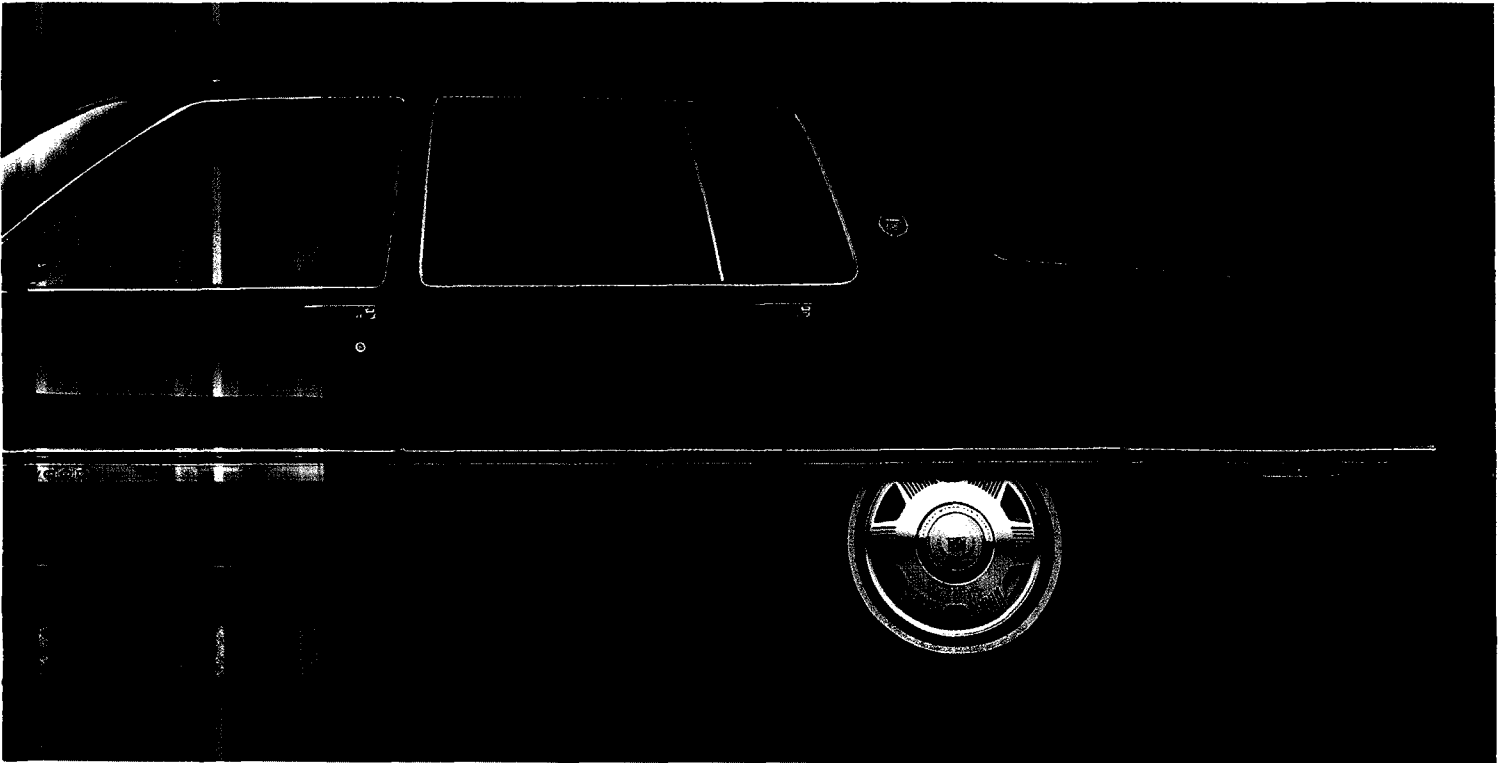
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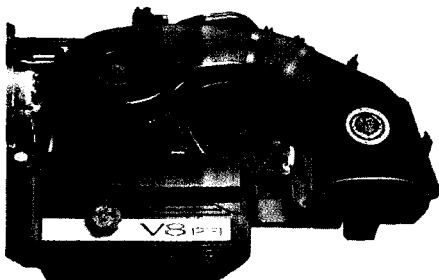
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ing concern for human mortality having been rendered especially apt by the somber circumstances of civil war. And he read the poems of Thomas Hood to invoke the lighter side. But he repeatedly returned to Shakespeare, whom he had probably first read as a boy in William Scott's *Lessons in Elocution* and for whom he had a lifelong fascination. He wrote the Shakespearean actor James Hackett, "Some of Shakespeare's plays I have never read; while others I have gone over perhaps as frequently as any unprofessional reader. Among the latter are *Lear*, *Richard Third*, *Henry Eighth*, *Hamlet*, and especially *Macbeth*. I think nothing equals *Macbeth*."

There is abundant evidence that in the most trying hours of his presidency Lincoln sought out Shakespeare's plays as a source of strength and consolation. Don E. Fehrenbacher relates this affinity for Shakespeare to Lincoln's keen sense of his role and ultimate responsibility in the carnage of the Civil War. "To some indeterminable extent and in some intuitive way, Lincoln seems to have assimilated the substance of the plays into his own experience and deepening sense of tragedy."

Jefferson, too, had been extremely fond of poetry in his youth, as his literary commonplace book and other evidence indicates. His poetic acquaintance was wide, though his tastes were fairly conventional. Like many sophisticated readers of his day, he was smitten by the works of Ossian, the putative third-century Celtic bard whose poems were actually the work of James Macpherson. One of the things that attracted Jefferson to Ossian

was the supposed similarity of his bardic offerings to the writings of Homer and Virgil, whom Jefferson also greatly admired. He was decidedly partial to the classics, including Horace, the great favorite of the Enlightenment. And like most readers of his time, Jefferson revered Shakespeare, whom he singled out as the English poet to be studied most diligently. His library contained, at one time or another, many different editions of Shakespeare, and he was quite familiar with the efforts of eighteenth-century editors who vied with one another to improve the reliability of the text.

But Jefferson's taste for poetry declined as he grew older. About the time he assumed the presidency, he confessed to a correspondent that his youthful relish for poetry had almost completely deserted him. Unlike Lincoln, he seems to have faced the problems of his presidency without resorting to literary works for perspective or inspiration. It would have been out of character for him to have read aloud, let alone to members of his Cabinet, and he probably allowed himself comparatively little time for purely personal reading. A notable exception was his discovery of John Baxter's history of England, which he embraced and recommended enthusiastically as an alternative to the "subversive" history of David Hume. Another exception was a purposeful excursion into the New Testament, his first effort to extract the "diamonds" of authentic Christianity from the corrupted text of the Gospels. This strictly private project may be the appropriate counterpart to Lincoln's reading Shakespeare aloud to his visitors, for it exemplifies Jefferson's characteristic retreat to his study and his need to concentrate his own "recreational" activities on what he would have called "useful objects."

THE CORE

It goes on burning in your son's brain
after the last war: standing
on guard in the desert at night
he'd watch a great blast of fire
he knew would destroy him. At sunset
the cliffs of Sinai open their veins.
The Red Sea closes over the chariots.
We think it will never end
all summer, his chain-smoking, jumpy
fingers during our visits in the ward.
There are redwoods in California
that feed for months on the heat
of their own destruction. You can see
where fires have guzzled their way
to the core, until the tree,
what's left of it, stands
gaping around its absence.

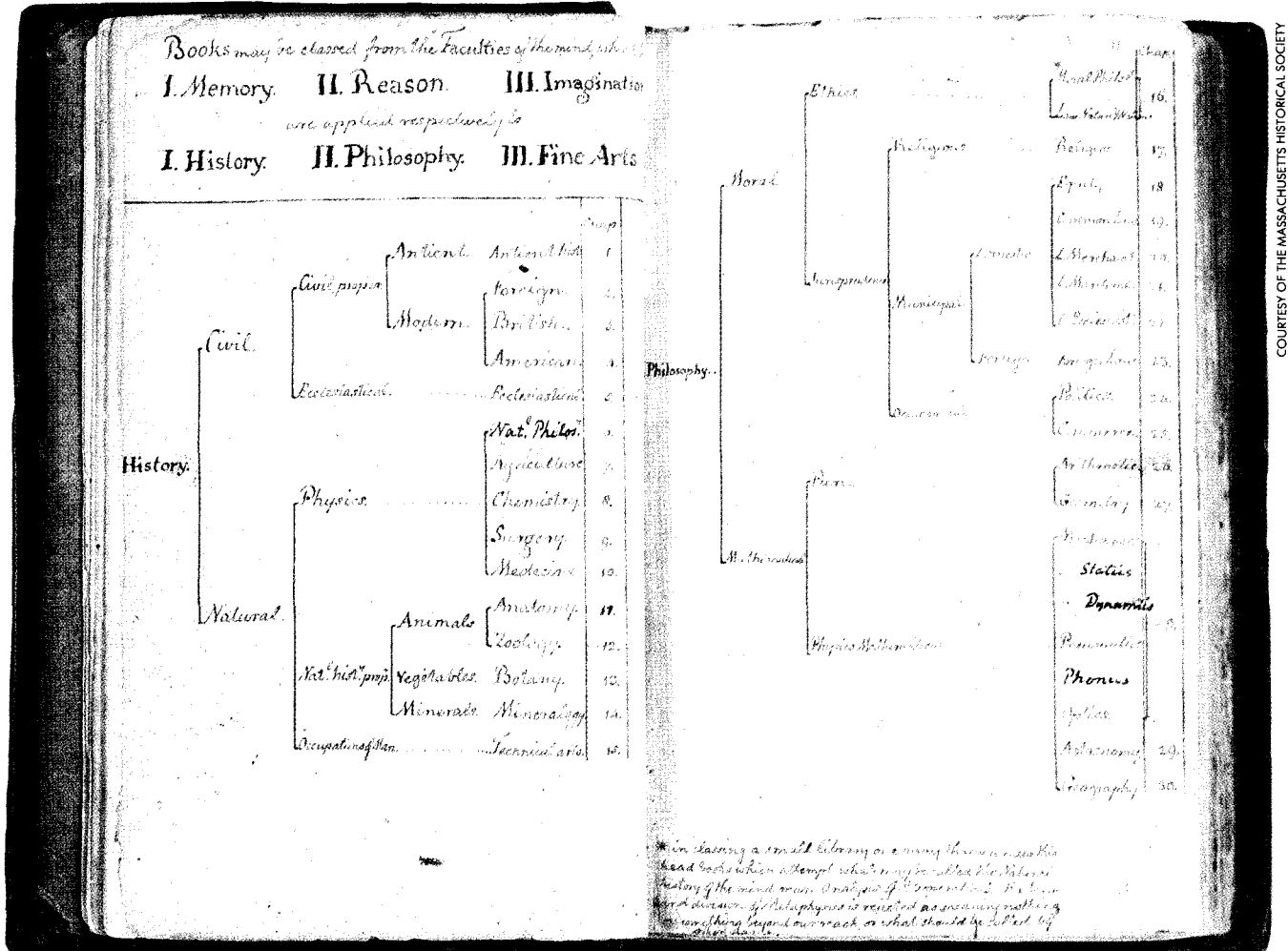
—Shirley Kaufman

NOWHERE IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JEFFERSON and Lincoln more dramatically demonstrated, or more characteristic, than in their personal libraries. Jefferson's famous library was his most cherished possession, on which he lavished vast amounts of time and money. Having started out in life as a reader and collector of books, Jefferson already owned a very sizable library at the age of twenty-six, when his mother's house burned and he lost most of his books. So determined was he to replace his library with a grander one that within three years he had acquired a collection three to four times as large. In the face of great difficulties during the revolutionary years, and though effectively cut off from the chief sources of books abroad, Jefferson managed steadily to build up his library. He recorded in 1783 that he possessed the resounding total of 2,640 volumes, but even then he was assembling a long list of books he hoped to acquire abroad. In fact, he collected so assiduously during his five years in France that he nearly doubled the size of his holdings. As a consequence, by the time of his retirement from the presidency, many years later, his library had grown to unprecedented proportions

and may well have been, as he believed it to be, "the choicest collection of books in the United States."

As a poor boy and later, as a young man heavily in debt, Lincoln owned little. But even when he could afford books, he rarely bothered to acquire them. Indeed, it is difficult to find a record of his buying a book. While at New Salem, upon being advised to study English grammar by Mentor Graham, he reportedly walked several miles to acquire a copy of Kirkham's grammar. But when he had mastered it, he apparently gave it away—to Ann Rutledge. To Herndon, who was a voracious reader and

LINCOLN WAS MARTYRED AT THE MOMENT OF HIS greatest achievement. Jefferson lived on for many years after his presidency. Ever active, though reclusive, he achieved much during those seventeen years, not the least of which was a lasting persona, as the Sage of Monticello. He had long anticipated his return to private life and to the blessings of the triad he often named—his family, his farm, and his books. In the first two of these he experienced bitter disappointments, as he found himself powerless to reconcile the quarreling and disaffected members of his family, and just as powerless to manage



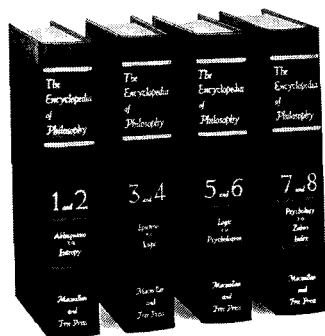
THE CLASSIFICATION SCHEME IN THOMAS JEFFERSON'S "CATALOGUE OF LIBRARY" (1783)

an eager collector of books, it seemed that Lincoln had, "aside from his law books and the few gilded volumes that ornamented the centre-table in his parlor at home, comparatively no library." This may understate the case somewhat, for Robert Lincoln remembered that his father had some books at home. "I remember well a large bookcase full of them." But Herndon is probably justified in his conclusion that Lincoln "never seemed to care to own or collect books." Upon leaving Springfield for Washington and the presidency, he apparently gave most of the books he did own to Herndon.

his lands on a paying basis and extricate himself from an increasing burden of debt. But in his books he found solace and satisfaction, and he indulged himself during these years in what he described as "a canine appetite for reading." "I cannot live without books," he confessed to John Adams—and during the last eleven years of his life he assembled more than 2,000 carefully selected volumes to replace the collection he had sold to Congress.

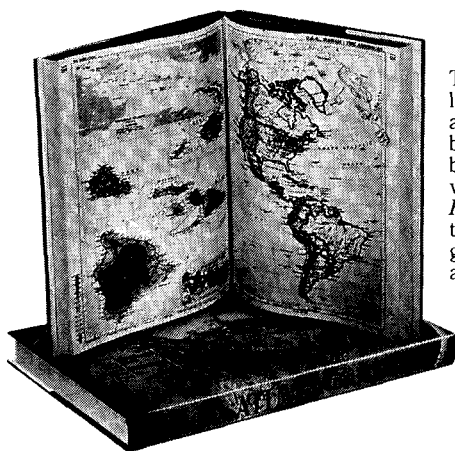
Because Lincoln was a self-taught man, his biographers have made much of his reading. But as the author of the best study of the subject, David C. Mearns, has

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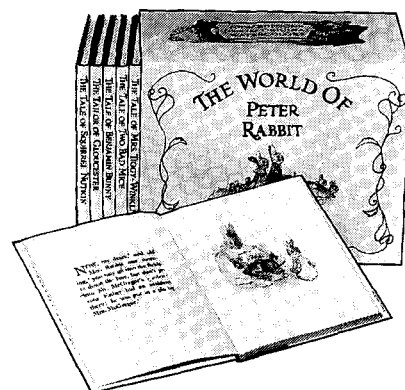


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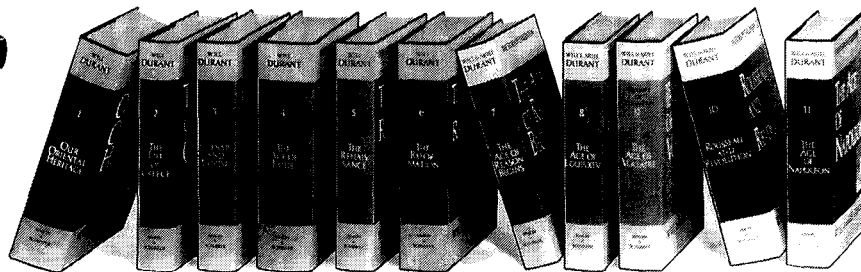
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The ending of the Cold War makes possible the kind of investments in caring that could realize the dream of raising the quality of life. The enemies of that promise are work, will, and time

A NATIONAL CARE AGENDA

BY SUZANNE GORDON



THE UNITED STATES IS EXPERIENCING AN EXTREME crisis in caring. As a society we cannot seem to muster the political will to care for the most precious things we produce—other human beings. The United States has slipped to twenty-fifth place in the world in its infant-mortality rate. Twenty percent of America's children are destitute. More than 37 million people have no health insurance; 20 million to 30 million more are underinsured. Today, as patients are discharged earlier and earlier from the nation's hospitals, family members are increasingly asked to provide for their complex medical and emotional needs. It is estimated that 1.8 million women now care for children and elders simultaneously, and 33 percent of women who care for frail elderly relatives do so in addition to holding down jobs. Yet not only do these caregivers—who relieve our health-care system of a tremendous financial burden—receive little help; they are often penalized for providing such care, through the loss of wages or of the job itself.

Congress recently refused to override President George Bush's veto of the Family and Medical Leave Act—a bill that would have allowed at least some workers to take time off to care for sick relatives. Thus many Americans continue to face the loss of their jobs if they try to fulfill their caregiving responsibilities to either young or old. As for the elderly, they lack catastrophic health-care coverage, and to be eligible for government assistance for long-term nursing-home care, they often must sell all that they own.

America's public education system—once the cornerstone of our democracy—is in a shambles. Millions of Americans today are homeless. Child care is unobtainable for many and often of poor quality where it does exist. Some European women who work in the home can take advantage of publicly supported child-care services; American women cannot. And again, Congress and the President have rejected the attempt to legislate a minimal unpaid parental-leave policy, one that very few Americans could afford to take advantage of anyway.

Not only do we famously refuse to give caregivers adequate respect and remuneration; popular self-help writers and psychological movements actually seem to denigrate care. Thus best-selling authors and leaders of the so-called Recovery Movement, such as Robin Norwood and John Bradshaw, now describe professional and non-professional caregivers as care addicts, and list caregiving as one of the addictions that millions of Americans must recover from.

This political and cultural environment is discouraging potential recruits—male and female—from entering the caring professions and is making it more difficult for those already in them to remain. Over the past decade there has been a much-publicized nursing shortage in America. The average community-hospital RN vacancy rate jumped from 4.4 percent in 1983 to 11.3 percent in 1987. Currently 10.6 percent of budgeted positions for hospital staff RNs remain unfilled, more than double the vacancy rate in 1983. Although 1.6 million registered nurses are now in the nation's work force, federal estimates project that more than 600,000 new jobs for RNs will be created by the year 2000. From 1984 to 1987 the enrollment of students studying to become registered nurses fell by 27 percent.

America also has a teacher shortage. Over the next five years the nation will need 1.3 million new teachers. To ensure an adequate supply, school systems would have to hire 25 percent of all students in each of the next five college graduating classes, only a small fraction of whom say they plan to go into teaching.

Finally, America's negative attitudes toward care have worsened personal relations between men and women, jeopardizing many women's hopes that men will be more caring in their personal and professional lives.

A Life-style, Not a Life

CARE IS LIFE, BUT IN OUR SOCIETY WE HAVE DIMINISHED AND SUBVERTED IT. We have radically overvalued competition, independence, self-reliance, and aggression, making of them the organizing principles around which we construct our politics and policies, our ethics, and even many of our personal relationships.

But no society, no individual, can function without care. That is why in so many respects our lives no longer seem to work: why so many are so unfulfilled at work and at home, and why we complain that the people on whom we depend for gentleness and generosity, empathy and concern, no longer seem to have the time or energy to care. The social devaluation of care threatens to corrupt and compromise all who need it and all who give it.

There is a window on our disorder in the movie *Wall Street*. It comes in a scene in which Charlie Sheen, the poor boy who made good as the young protégé of Michael Douglas, and Daryl Hannah, the woman who is determined never to be a loser, engage in an orgy of acquisition to decorate his newly purchased Manhattan apartment. They fill it with extravagantly expensive modern art, furnishings, and the most up-to-date culinary gadgets. The only thing they lack is the time to enjoy the things they've worked so hard to acquire. They have a life-style but no life.

Too many of us have been reduced to a version of this emotional deprivation in the midst of apparent material plenty. We have children other people care for, friends we have no time to socialize with, spouses about whom we complain but with whom we have no time to struggle to create more fulfilling relationships. We have also—perhaps unwittingly and surely unwisely—abdicated our moral responsibilities as citizens. Too many of us don't even bother to vote these days, and too often those who do bother vote against—not for—those political candidates who would support an agenda on which caregiving occupied a central place. Many citizens' main concern is to pay less in taxes rather than to create a politics that will support the kind of caring culture that will nourish us all.



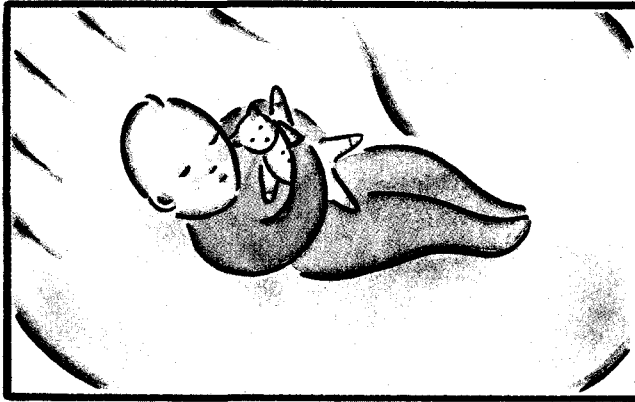
A Care Agenda

TO RENEW WHAT THE AUTHOR RICHARD J. Margolis has called “the civic heart” requires far more than the family agenda that many liberals and progressives have been calling for. We need a National Care Agenda that weaves together our caring needs over a lifetime. We must not compromise in articulating this agenda but rather demand the recognition that we, as human beings, are entitled both to the time it takes to care for ourselves and others and to the social and financial supports that make caregiving possible.

Time is the main item on the National Care Agenda as I envision it. As we become a nation of work addicts and moonlighters, we are depriving ourselves of the time necessary for child-rearing and other family or leisure activities—in other words, the time required to enjoy a rich and varied life.

Men and women who work from forty-eight to eighty hours a week have no time to be more than survivors or careerists and consumers. For these people alternative work arrangements like part-time work, flex-time, and job-sharing do little more than rearrange an unacceptable status quo. Today, in fact, many women are working more than two shifts. When you add commuting time to the typical schedule of professionals, or consider the fact that many working-class and lower-income women are in fact working two jobs, housework and child-rearing actually constitute a third—graveyard—shift that's squeezed in at night and on weekends. And men who work nights and weekends are in fact working two shifts. How can women persuade them to share more of the work of any shift when their homes are little more than hotel rooms or boardinghouses? As for children, the main victims of a society that values work more than care, they are too often left undefended, because the adults on whom they depend for affection and protection are imprisoned in a world of work without end.

The forty-hour week is not an option; it is a necessity. It is not an end point but a new beginning. It is important to remember that when the Fair Labor Standards Act, which established the forty-hour week, was passed, in



the late 1930s, progressive reformers and even some key congressional leaders hoped that the new standard would serve as a point of departure for even further reductions in the work week; they chiefly had in mind a thirty-hour week, with job-sharing to increase employment. Few supposed that the hundred-year effort to reduce the work week would stop at forty hours, and yet it has. Significantly, some of our European trading partners are already moving toward a thirty-five-hour standard.

A minimum annual paid vacation of at least one month, guaranteed by statute from the moment a worker enters the work force, is the second item on the National Care Agenda. Although longer vacations are the norm in Western Europe, they have rarely, if ever, been mentioned in the debate about family and work in the United States. A first step toward securing adequate family and leisure time would be the establishment of a national vacation allotment and a universal right to a month of paid vacation.

Giving citizens time to care also means helping them take time off from work when their families need care the most. Paid leave policies that allow either parent to take at least six months off work after having or adopting a newborn and other time off to care for sick children, parents, or spouses is necessary to our progress, as is a high-quality subsidized child-care system for both preschool and school-aged children. Under the National Care Agenda child care would not be limited to families in which both parents work outside the home: it would be available, on a part-time basis, to families in which parents work inside the home.

Universal access to high-quality, cost-effective health care that is both community- and hospital-based must be available to all Americans. No one should labor under the fear that the loss of a job will mean the loss of health-care benefits. A national health-care system must provide high-quality short- and long-term nursing and convalescent care to the elderly, so that senior citizens do not have to bankrupt themselves and their families to pay for the privilege of dying. It must provide respite care for the approximately seven million home caregivers in the United States who want to continue caring for sick children, relatives, or spouses in the home and need support,

education, and help to do it. Moreover, such a health-care system must give nurses and other non-physician providers far more respect and remuneration than they now receive, and also a major voice in determining and evaluating how care is delivered. This is the only way to make our health-care system not only cost-effective but also *care*-effective.

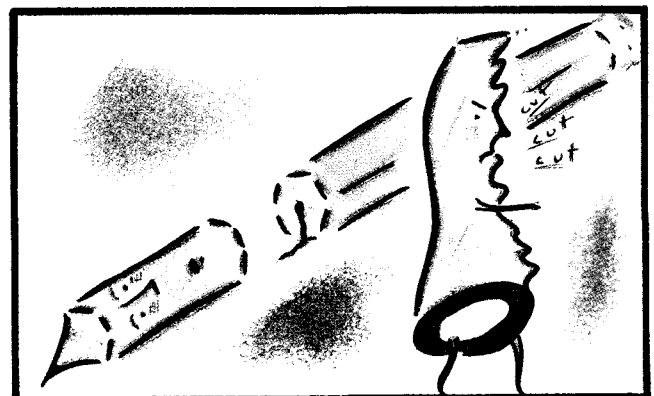
An Opening for Hope

IN RESPONSE TO ANY SUCH CALL AS THIS ONE FOR A National Care Agenda, political and business leaders will insist that throwing money at social problems solves nothing. Besides, they will argue, a National Care Agenda is too costly. We will manage to find \$500 billion to cover the cost of the S&L failures, but we can't afford to pay for care.

The United States is not India or Bangladesh. It is one of the world's richest countries. The obstacle to a care agenda is not lack of money; it is lack of vision and will.

Events in Eastern Europe and our crisis in caring at home present us with an extraordinary—perhaps unprecedented—opportunity to move in a new direction. We now spend almost \$300 billion a year on defense—far more than is needed, surely, in the post-Cold War world. Credible economic and political experts now believe it is realistic to cut our defense budget by at least 50 percent in the next five to seven years. This would give us more than enough money to help finance the National Care Agenda, and much else besides.

Grounding our social programs in the imperatives of care rather than of the marketplace promises to release even more money with which to finance a care agenda. Consider, for example, the current waste in our national health-care budget. Because the health-care system has become almost entirely market-driven, we spend more on health care than any other nation in the world and get less return on our investment. Canada, a country with a well-financed, effective national health-insurance system, spends only 8.7 percent of GNP on health care (we spend 11.8 percent), and everyone in the country is insured. One typical Canadian hospital has three people in its billing office using a single personal computer. A com-



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parable American hospital employs fifty billing clerks who use a \$2 million billing computer in order to fathom and service a byzantine world in which more than 1,500 different insurance plans exist. Altogether, we devote 23 percent of our health-care budget to administrative costs. According to prominent health-care experts, there is now enough money in our health-care system to pay for high-quality care for every American without increasing expenditures.

There has never been a more propitious moment to create a truly caring society. Not only is the money available to finance it but a vast constituency can be mobilized to fight for it in the community, the workplace, and the political arena. Over the past several decades the millions of citizens who so desperately need a care agenda have been divided and powerless. In the approach to politics which is conventional today citizens tend to be seen as target audiences for a series of disconnected single-issue messages.

And there is a strong tendency to identify with one "special interest" to the exclusion of all others. Parents interested in child care for young children fail to focus on their future educational needs until it is too late to save schools that are deteriorating now. Parents with school-age children feel that they have left the struggle for parental leave or full-time day care behind them because they no longer have infants or toddlers. Middle-aged men and women preoccupied with their own health problems or with caring for ailing or dying parents hear about the "family agenda" and conclude that it applies only to working parents with young children. People who are well and have health insurance erroneously believe that the nation's health-care crisis will never affect them. And those who personally experience the crisis in caring in any of these areas try desperately to survive it and tend to want to forget the "nightmare" when it is over. They often can't bear the thought of reliving it, even in the sublimated form of taking political action for broader change.

The Politics of Care

BY LINKING THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF various constituencies in a general movement for care, such divisions can be overcome. Translating the family agenda into a care agenda, for example, allows us to fight critics who counterpose the needs of stay-at-home mothers against those of mothers who work outside the home. Those of us who respect the demands of caregiving work—no matter what the setting—understand that mothers who work full-time in the home often need as much support and relief as women who work outside the home. Stay-at-home mothers don't get negotiated coffee and lunch breaks. There is no closing time; there are no free weekends. And today, when so many women commute to jobs elsewhere, it's harder

than ever for stay-at-home mothers to enlist a neighbor, a friend, or a family member to look after their children so that they can get some time off.

There is no reason that stay-at-home mothers should not have access to expanded child care. In France, for example, nursery schools are part of the public education system, and many stay-at-home mothers utilize these *écoles maternelles*. In Scandinavia mothers are allowed to use community child-care centers for a certain number of hours a week. American mothers who remain at home to care for children with handicaps or long-term illnesses would benefit from more respite care and visiting-nurse services. Furthermore, their families—which depend on the health-care coverage of only one parent—face a far greater risk of being underinsured or of losing their insurance, in the event of the wage earner's job loss or layoff. They are a logical part of the constituency for a national health insurance not tied to private medical plans or employment.

A National Care Agenda would be likely to attract the many millions of men who are now taking care of young children and elderly parents or relatives, or who will be faced with such responsibilities in the future and will need adequate social and financial support. More important, if men are not furloughed from the prison of work by means of shorter hours and longer vacations, they will never play a greater role in family life, and women's liberation will remain the stalled revolution about which so many now speak with such despair and sorrow.

The promise of women's liberation, after all, was more than just the attainment of abstract equality with men, important as that goal was and remains. It also contained the hope that qualities and activities long despised or condescended to as "feminine" would be valued as vital social necessities to be shared by women and men alike. Women would not just change men, went the hope of this transformative feminism, they would change the world, by making it—to use the phrase of a later day—kinder and gentler. But transformative feminism, more a dream than a movement, ran squarely up against the market. Too much that was too threatening to the bottom line would have had to change too fast to accommodate it. Thus women entering the workplace were forced to make the same choice between work and care that men have long had to make. That is what it meant to be equal to men in a man's world. This is equality of deprivation, and it is not enough.

What more and more people want today is equality of fulfillment. Indeed, it is virtually an imperative of our culture; this is the age of the consumer, and the consumer will not be denied. But care is one commodity that cannot be supplied by the marketplace. Like financial security and health care for the elderly, education for the young, and clean air for all, the provision of care must be asserted by society against the market. It is the necessary next step in the humanization of capitalism. □



A Short Story



The Shadow of the Cross

by Marly Swick

LYING IN THE UNFAMILIAR BED BESIDE HIS FAMILIAR sleeping wife, Evan tries to remember back to the time, not so impossibly long ago, when he did not love Delia, who is still awake, like him, in the adjacent hotel room. He can see the bright hem of light underneath the door dividing their two rooms. It seems, in the darkness, like some golden, electrified boundary: the line between right and wrong, the line between light and darkness.

To his surprise, Evan sees the phenomenon clearly—and wishes his own passions were, miraculously, as visible

He imagines that she is propped up on a nest of pillows, reading herself to sleep. All day, in between sight-seeing excursions, she has been reading *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. Unlike him, she reads very quickly and does not comment aloud on what she is reading. Her bright, dark, birdlike eyes seem to fly over the printed words. She makes fun of the ponderous way he pores over the travel guides, underlining and starring the important tidbits of information. She calls him “the

graduate student.” And his wife, Molly, laughs and nods her head.

The two women love to find him ridiculous. He understands the dynamic at work here and generally plays along with good humor. The silly but beloved castrato. That’s his role. Meanwhile, Molly, the wife, must act unromantic and unpossessive so that Delia, the single friend, will not feel like a third wheel. And Delia, the loose cannon, must strike just the right balance so as to suggest that she finds her friend’s husband attractive (otherwise both the friend and the husband might take offense) without actually being attracted to him.

Behind the closed door the light blinks off. Like him, Delia is an insomniac. And often, lying restlessly awake next to Molly, his brain grinding away in the darkness, he has thought that he should have married a fellow insomniac, instead of a woman whose eyelids seem to operate like an on-off switch to her brain. In the old days, in the early years of their marriage, it was different. Molly would stay awake, whispering with him in the darkness—a kind of conversational lullaby—until sometimes he drifted off to sleep before her. But ever since Aviva, their first daughter, was born, Molly has slept like a rock. An oblivious, complacent rock, he thinks, restlessly tossing off the blanket, although usually her soft, even breathing is a source of comfort and pleasure to him.

He slides gingerly out of bed, walks over to the window, and pulls back the drape. In the moonlight he can see the looming dark shape of Taos Mountain. He remembers snatches of Cather’s description, which he skimmed earlier in the day, at the airport, when Delia left the paperback lying on the seat next to his while the two women went off to the ladies’ room. In the deep, deep silence he can almost hear the faint clapping of Bishop Latour’s horse as the bishop makes his way up the dusty path toward the house of Padre Martínez, that lusty, lackadaisical excuse for a man of God. In college—“The American Novel From Hawthorne to Hemingway”—Evan had written a paper identifying Padre Martínez as the true hero of the novel. He remembers the novel only dimly and wonders if he would see it the same way now. Now that he is a husband and a father.

The dark, ancient immovability of the mountain calms him, and he thinks maybe he can sleep. The room is chilly. As he slides back underneath the covers, Molly’s warm, soft, sleeping flesh seems like a gift, as fragrant and delicious as fresh-baked bread. He licks her shoulder and she stirs slightly, as if shrugging off a fly. He does it again and she does it again and he smiles to himself in the darkness, happy to have reminded himself that he does in fact love his wife. Almost as much as he loves their two daughters, Aviva and Chloe, who are staying with his parents, back in L.A., for the weekend. With his eyes closed he can see them, clear as a home movie, lying in their twin beds, sleeping the deep sleep of the innocent. The thought of doing anything to lose them sends a shiv-

er through him, and he nestles closer to his wife’s inert yet receptive flesh. As he drifts off toward sleep, the ghost of Bishop Latour materializes in the empty chair by the window. Evan breathes easier as he senses the bishop’s stern, unflinching eye gazing upon him, making certain that even in his dreams he does not cross that bright golden line.

THE NEXT MORNING THE THREE OF THEM meet in the hotel lobby and walk the four picturesque blocks to Michael’s Kitchen, the description of which Evan has starred and underlined in his well-thumbed guidebook. The early-morning light is so pure, so *lucid*, that he feels somehow relieved, as if this is not a place for murky, hidden entanglements. Only bright, primary relationships—wife, husband, friend—as in a children’s book. A block from the restaurant the two women pause in front of a small gallery, their attention snagged by some unusual-looking rugs. He waits patiently for a few moments while the women debate whether a particular rug would look good in Delia’s bedroom, and then, like a dance partner, he places his hand lightly in the small of his wife’s back. “Come on,” she says, hooking her arm through Delia’s. “We’ve got a starving man here.”

Both women smile indulgently, as if his appetite were something sort of crude and silly and male, like a jockstrap. But once they are actually seated in the crowded restaurant, after a fifteen-minute wait, both women order larger breakfasts than he does. While he eats his modest scrambled eggs and toast, they wolf down Amazonian platters of *huevos rancheros*, refried beans, and tortillas. Between mouthfuls they negotiate the day’s itinerary. The balance of power here is tricky. Delia, the outsider, insists on her total amenability to anything, while Molly and he gently butt heads. His wife is a great believer in spontaneity, hanging loose, what she calls “playing it by ear,” a phrase he has come to detest over the nine years of their marriage. Having no talent for improvisation, he prefers the comfort of a set score. In the end, however, they generally end up doing whatever Delia wants to do. Because she refuses to state her preferences and because she is, in a sense, the guest in their relationship, they struggle to divine her true wishes and grant them. It is a form of hospitality, even though all three of them are away from home. By the time the bill finally arrives, they have agreed that they will spend the morning at the pueblo and then drive to the D. H. Lawrence ranch; the afternoon they will “play by ear.”

Evan holds the restaurant door open for the two women. Every time he walks outside, he is amazed by the place, as if his amazement were a dog he had parked outside, to wait faithfully for him. After eleven years of Los Angeles smog he thinks of Taos as a sort of Shangri-la, except for the steady stream of traffic through the center of

town, which woke him up at dawn. He is a sound engineer for a recording company, and his acutely developed hearing is both a blessing and a curse. Of course, the traffic in Santa Monica, where they live, is much, much worse than the traffic here, but it has a different pitch and rhythm, so familiar to him by now that he never even hears it unless it suddenly shuts off, like the hum of a refrigerator. He notices Delia's pace slow down involuntarily as they pass by the shop with the rugs, and he can feel her wanting to ask if they can stop for a minute, now that the shop is open, and then deciding not to, probably because she thinks he won't want to.

"Let's duck in here for a second," he says, "and check out the prices."

Molly shrugs, surprised, and Delia looks away from him, as if aware that he is doing this for her. A faint smile flits across her face. Inside the shop the two women bend over a rug, examining it more closely—in a businesslike way. Molly is a part-time interior decorator and Delia is a textile designer. They met about a year ago, when Molly "discovered" Delia, who was just breaking into the design scene in L.A. after several years in Honolulu. She has an ex-husband—who doesn't get mentioned much, at least not in Evan's presence—still living in Hawaii. Evan glances at the price tags on a couple of the rugs and can't believe they're serious. Still, as he surreptitiously watches Delia's delicate fingers stroking the weave and hears her disappointed sigh, it is all he can do to keep himself from whisking out his Visa card and playing the indulgent father. What he feels for her, however, is not paternal.

"Isn't he being a model of patience?" Molly looks over at him and winks. The salesgirl laughs in a sisterly fashion. And he shrugs, a silly grin on his face, like some harmless husband in a sitcom.

"Let's go," Delia says abruptly, rescuing him.

OUT BEHIND THE HOTEL, THEY ARE SITTING IN the car with the motor running, waiting for Molly, who has run back inside for the extra roll of film she suddenly remembered. He sits in the back seat of the rented Ford Taurus, conscious of his fuzzy bare legs stretched out on the seat. This morning, when he emerged in his khaki shorts, the women teased him about his gorgeous legs. To cover his

embarrassed pleasure, he pointed out that no man these days would ever dare to make such a sexist remark about a woman. They agreed that this was true but appeared to feel no remorse.

Delia sits in the passenger seat, cleaning her sunglasses, which dangle from a shocking-pink cord around her neck. She holds them up close to her mouth and huffs hot breath onto the lenses, as if giving them mouth-to-mouth resuscitation; then she polishes each lens with the hem of her turquoise tank top. Each steamy little huff sends a shiver right through him.

Seating themselves in the car has become yet another covert exercise in diplomacy. When Delia makes a beeline for the back seat, Molly protests, offering various excuses to avoid ending up in the conventional gestalt: husband in driver's seat, wife in passenger seat, friend in back seat. "I feel like driving," Molly will say, or "Let Evan sit in the back so he can stretch his legs—do you mind?"

The fierce sun beats down on the car and sweat starts to trickle inside his T-shirt, but he feels no real impatience for Molly to return. The radio plays Spanish pop music. Unlike the two women, who are fairly fluent, he doesn't understand a word of Spanish. He feels a vestigial flicker of anger from last night, the one time he has lost his cool thus far. Tired from the flight and the long drive up from Albu-

querque, they were sitting out on the patio at Ogelvie's after dinner, drinking blue margaritas. They were all fairly smashed by this point, and the two women had started chattering away in Spanish, pretending to be talking about him, hamming it up, until he had stood up abruptly and stormed off to the men's room. When he returned, they apologized. The guilty look on their faces and their obvious desire to "behave" reminded him of his daughters, and he melted immediately.

"Would you like me to change the station?" Delia asks politely. Her hand dangles over the back seat, almost grazing his bare knee. All six feet and one inch of bodily sensation is abruptly focused in his right knee. He is hypnotized by the languid sway of her fingers. He feels as if he is back in high school. He hates it and loves it.

"No," he says. "It's fine."

Delia shrugs and nudges the air-conditioning up a notch.

The real agony is in not knowing what Delia feels. Sometimes he is certain that this madness is mutual, that



they are both locked into a terrible frozen passion. What is so terrible, he thinks, besides the obvious guilt, is that it can last forever precisely because it *is* frozen: this passion, unlike most passions, cannot melt away or burn itself up. He remembers those rock stars in the sixties who used to have plaster casts made of their erections. He thinks he may be doomed to go through life with a permanent emotional, if not physical, erection.

Other times, he thinks the whole stupid, sick thing is all in his own mind and hormones. Delia is completely innocent, "clueless," as his older daughter would say. If Delia knew what he was thinking and feeling, she would be furious with him for ruining a lovely, lighthearted friendship. Sometimes he thinks maybe he should just get it off his chest, confess to her like a naughty little boy, and try to proceed as if this were just a silly adolescent crush, which in fact it may be. But something always stops him. He's not exactly sure what. He's not sure of anything anymore. It could be loyalty to Molly, he thinks, but more likely it is the fear that Delia will say she feels the same way he does. And then what?

Delia leans over and punches in a different radio station. He thinks about leaning forward and switching off the ignition to save gas, but he feels somehow safer with the motor running. The best evidence to support his theory that his passion is not totally unrequited is how silent they get whenever Molly leaves them alone for more than a minute. The joking drops away. Around Molly they are like two old friends, but alone together they become strangers. Their silence seems to expand inside him, the pressure building, until he thinks it might blow a hole through his chest. He rolls the window down, then back up, as if to let something in or out.

"Here she comes. Finally." Delia pats his knee as she waves to Molly running across the parking lot, her Nikon suspended from her neck like a third eye.

"Sorry, sorry, sorry." Molly slides in breathlessly behind the wheel. "Here." She yanks the camera strap over her head and hands Evan the Nikon.

As she puts the car in gear, they all start to talk at once.

Molly sails out of the parking lot and turns right, with no need to consult a map. After college she lived with her painter boyfriend in Santa Fe for a year, and she seems to remember her way around the area as if it were yesterday. It was she who suggested this trip, one evening at El Coyote, when somehow they got onto the subject of New Mexico and Delia confessed she had never been and had always wanted to go. "Evan's never been either," Molly said, unwrapping her steaming green corn tamale. "We should go. The three of us. Why not?"

And here they are.

Hearing conversation from the back seat is difficult, so Evan entertains himself by focusing the camera on one woman's face and then the other's, back and forth, as if he were filming a tennis match. The two women could be sisters. They are both dark, tanned, lean—not at all

out of place in this geographical context. He suspects that some narcissistic attraction is at the basis of their friendship, since people often comment on the resemblance. He also suspects that this is part of *his* attraction to Delia: he feels that he already knows her—but not quite. Looking at her, he sees many of the same obvious physical charms that drew him to Molly in the first place, without all the inevitable irritating little habits that start to grate on your nerves, day in and day out, over the years. Somehow Delia is more like the way Molly was before he got to know her so well. She is tuned in to him in the way Molly was before she got to know *him* so well. Sometimes he can *feel* her listening to him when he speaks; he can *feel* her watching him as he walks across the room. Whereas Molly has seen and heard it all before. Or at least that's the impression she gives. Oblivious complacency. He imagines that making love to Delia would be the best of both worlds: all the comforts of home plus the thrill of a foreign port. He sighs and puts the lens cap back on the camera.

"Here we are," Molly says, pointing to a dusty cluster of adobe buildings which he recognizes from countless paintings and postcards. At the entrance is a sort of toll-booth. Molly stops the car and rolls down the window, smiling her irresistible smile.

An unsmiling Indian man says, "The entrance fee is five dollars."

Delia immediately grabs her wallet and pulls out a five, but Molly waves it away, taking instead the bill that Evan proffers from the back seat.

"It's another five if you want to take pictures," the man says, frowning at the Nikon.

Evan groans and Delia nods her head in agreement. Molly, a photo fanatic, hesitates—both Evan and Delia kid her about being part Japanese—and then reluctantly says, "We'll leave the camera in the car."

Delia gives her a supportive pat on the back and Evan lets out a sigh of relief. All along he has had this worry, probably completely irrational, that when the snapshots are developed, they may reveal something to his wife that she has failed to pick up on. Since she is an avid photographer, most of the pictures tend to be of Delia and him. Delia and him in front of various scenic backdrops. Pictures don't lie, or so they say, and anyway, who can pore over real life with the same sharp-eyed scrutiny that, in the tranquillity of recollection, a photo album allows?

ON THE WAY BACK FROM THE D. H. LAWRENCE ranch they all admit they are hungry, and Molly insists on stopping at a roadside café instead of driving a bit farther to a place that Evan has read about in one of his travel guides. This is part of the playing-it-by-ear portion of the afternoon. The place is grubby and the food turns out to be overpriced microwaved mush. Evan is sulky, Molly



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defensive, and Delia withdrawn—trying for once not to take sides, Evan thinks, since Molly's side is so clearly unsupportable in this instance.

"Come on, it's only lunch," Molly says, "not the end of the world."

After this tacit admission from Molly that she blew it, Evan nods his head agreeably and says the only complimentary thing he can think to say about the meal: "The beer is nice and cold." After all, it *is* only a meal, and he does not really care that much about the restaurant. He just resents his image as the uptight graduate student enslaved to Fodor and Frommer; he wants it duly noted that playing it by ear does not always get you what you want. The only memorable part of the meal, as far as he's concerned, was the moment when Delia reached across the table with her napkin and pulled a string of cheese off his beard. Molly was busy talking to a couple at the next table who had daughters about the same age as Aviva and Chloe, and didn't see it. Although he was slightly embarrassed, the gesture struck him as very, very intimate.

Back in town they split up. The women go off to poke through the galleries, and he goes back to the hotel for a swim. The couple from the lousy restaurant are sitting out by the pool while their daughters splash around in the water. Seeing the little girls having such a good time, Evan suddenly misses his own daughters and feels a pang of guilt for not having brought them along, even though they adore staying with his parents, who spoil them rotten. His daughters are both blonde, like him, and so fresh and beautiful, like rosebuds, that Evan fears that he will walk into their room one morning and find nothing but two little piles of wilted petals lying on their twin beds.

When he comes in from swimming, the bed is littered with shopping bags and Molly is in the shower, singing old Linda Ronstadt songs. He nudges the packages to one side and stretches out on the bed. His muscles feel deeply relaxed from all the sun and swimming, but his mind feels tense, tight. He wishes he could reach inside his skull and massage his brain until his choppy brainwaves flattened into gentle ripples. Through a cloud of steam he sees Delia standing in the shower spray, naked, beckoning him to join her. He forces his eyes open, flicks on the bright reading light—like a splash of cold water—and concentrates on the mandala-like sand painting hanging on the wall opposite the bed. The shower clunks off and Molly emerges from the steamy bathroom, patting herself dry with a white towel that makes her dark tan appear even darker.

"God, I'm beat." She sweeps some packages onto the floor and throws herself onto the bed next to him. "Did you have a nice swim?"

He nods.

"Delia went back to one of the galleries. I told her we'd meet her at Doc Martin's at eight." She rolls

over and tugs his beard flirtatiously. "I even made reservations."

He pats her naked rump. "Good girl." He stares up at the ceiling, praying that he will be able to make it through this trip without doing something stupid, something everyone will regret.

"That really was a wretched dump we had lunch in." She reaches into a bag and pulls out two beaded belts that say TAOS and two T-shirts with coyotes howling at the moon. "I got these for the girls."

"Good." The sight of the little red and blue T-shirts seems to snap him back to himself. "Let's call the girls," he says, reaching for the phone. He knows that if he can just hear their voices, everything will be all right.

"We'll be home tomorrow, and I just called last night." She folds the T-shirts and stuffs them back in the bag. "Your mother will think we don't trust her."

"I just want to hear their voices," he insists. "Okay?"

Molly looks at him sharply, as if she is about to say something, and then shrugs. He reaches over and grabs the receiver and dials the number. Molly rests her wet head on his chest. Chloe, the five-year-old, answers on the second ring and launches into a shrill, breathless account of how Tuffy, his parents' old Sheltie, dragged a dead bird into the living room while they were eating pizza. He can feel Molly's laughter tickling his chest hairs. When Chloe runs out of verbal steam, Molly tugs at the phone cord. "Let me say hello."

He holds the receiver to her mouth. He suddenly feels very companionable, lying in bed naked with his wife, talking to their offspring. "Wow"—Molly gasps appreciatively—"that's amazing. Now may I please talk to your sister?" Evan winces as Chloe slams the receiver onto the counter, and Molly says, "Ouch." He kisses the top of her head and runs his free hand along the smooth curve of her inner thigh, higher and higher, until she moans slightly and slaps his hand playfully away. "This is sick. I'm talking to your daughter."

"Hey, Vivi, how's it going?" Evan raises his voice so that his older daughter can hear.

"Fine," she replies, like the aloof, blasé eight-year-old she has just recently become. "I was watching a video. *Splash*. Tom Hanks sells fruit and vegetables and stuff. Daryl Hannah's a mermaid. And he—"

"We have to go, sweetie," Molly butts in, knowing that if she doesn't, Aviva will summarize the entire plot in excruciating detail, with much backtracking and editorializing. She wants to be a movie reviewer when she grows up. Her favorite game is playing Siskel and Ebert with her best friend, Sage.

"Phew," Molly sighs as she hands him the receiver to hang up. "I hope this is a passing phase. Otherwise she's going to be a real bore at cocktail parties."

He laughs and insinuates his hand back between her legs. For the first time since they left home, he feels relaxed, centered, like his old self.

"This looks serious," she says.

"Reach out and touch someone." He laughs and pulls her down on top of him.

The door next door opens and shuts. Both of them freeze. They listen to Delia moving around, rattling paper, sliding open drawers. Molly reaches over and turns on the clock radio. A weather report. She rotates the dial until she hits some music. Next door the shower blasts on. They both unfreeze and pick up where they left off, but not quite. The momentum is broken. Something has gone out of it. They are like dancers who have suddenly lost the beat.

DINNER AT DOC MARTIN'S IS A LEISURELY AFFAIR. As far as they can tell, nothing happens in Taos at night. The one movie theater in the plaza is showing something they have already seen. So they eat slowly, noting how delicious it all is. When they trade bites, Evan notices, Molly and he trade, and Molly and Delia trade, but he and Delia do not trade, as if this would be too intimate. He can't tell whether Molly notices this or not. After dinner they order coffee. Then brandy. Mostly the two women keep the conversation gently afloat. Every so often he swims in with some comment and then swims away again. He notices a single man at a corner table watching them, the two women, like a dog with his nose pressed to the glass, his eyes full of naked longing. The man is about their age, not bad looking, dressed in casual but expensive clothes. A lawyer or architect, maybe. Recently divorced.

For a moment, as he starts in on his second brandy, Evan toys masochistically with the idea of inviting the man to join them. Ever since he fell in love with Delia, he has spent a lot of time thinking about the possibility of her meeting some other man. Sometimes, lying in bed next to his wife, he wishes that Delia *would* fall for someone—and soon. Before he has a chance to do something stupid. He knows, rationally, that this would be best for everyone. In his fantasy the four of them become the best of friends: tennis doubles, dinners at each other's houses, shared vacation condos in Aspen and Maui. But in his dreams all he feels is misery, rage, murder.

Delia yawns and sighs. She stretches, twisting to the right and then to the left. Her breasts rise and shine underneath the gauzy fabric of her dress. "I think I'll go read for a while and turn in early," she says. "I didn't get much sleep last night."

"Me neither," he says.

Her dark eyes lock with his for an instant and then quickly break away. She sighs again. She looks tired, unhappy, tired of being unhappy. This is part, maybe the main part, he thinks, of what attracts him to her. This shadow of unhappiness. He knows that a smarter man

would take this as a warning. What you see is what you get: an unhappy woman. But he, of course, thinks he can be the one to ring the bell, as if this were one of those carnival games where men line up with sledgehammers and pound away with all their male might. He will be the one to smash her unhappiness to smithereens and walk off with the prize. He is the prince in disguise that the sleeping princess has been waiting for all these long years. Delia, Delia, let down your hair.

"Poor Delia," Molly says, watching Delia walk away from them.

Evan feels a lick of anger as it suddenly occurs to him, ungenerously, that Molly enjoys feeling sorry for Delia, enjoys going out of her way to appear so very sensitive, enjoys bending over backward so as not to rub in her advantage as the wife. If he were Delia, he would hate her. He thinks of all the times Molly has urged him to think of someone, one of his musician buddies or tennis partners, to "fix Delia up with," as if she were broken, in need of repair. Out of the corner of his eye he sees the single man at the corner table—the nice-looking, well-dressed one—slap some money down and head toward the front door. In a hurry, Evan thinks. And he has a sudden, terrible hunch that the man has a plan. As Molly chatters on about the schedule for tomorrow, their last day in New Mexico, Evan imagines the man waylaying Delia at the corner with some light, inconsequential pleasantries, falling into step with her, inviting her for a nightcap in the hotel bar.

"We have to stop in Ranchos de Taos," Molly is saying. "You have to see the San Francisco de Asis Church, if nothing else."

Evan nods, not really listening. He is remembering the moment he realized that his feelings for Delia had changed. Molly had been after him for weeks to fix Delia up with his friend Jack. "Just invite him to dinner," Molly had said. "Don't say anything about Delia. We'll have the Narvesons over too, so it won't look so much like a setup."

But when Evan finally got around to inviting Jack, a notorious womanizer, Jack, as if smelling a trap, asked if he could bring along a date. Thrown for a loop, Evan had thought about just saying yes, but instead he spilled the beans to Jack about Delia. To hell with female subterfuge. Jack was skittish, dubious—he didn't want any part of it—and Evan found himself launching into a hard sell. When he had finished waxing eloquent about Delia's charms, Jack had laughed and said, "Maybe *you* should go out with her. You sound like you've got a bad case." "Don't be ridiculous," Evan had snapped back. Jack just smiled skeptically, eyebrows raised, and said, "Thanks, but I think I'll pass."

And suddenly Evan felt as if he had been granted a stay of execution. Later, as they were walking to their cars in the parking lot, Jack spanked Evan's rear with his racket and said, "Don't do anything I wouldn't do," and



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winked. After that Evan had avoided Jack, making excuses, until Jack finally stopped calling.

Molly sets down her empty brandy glass and pats his hand on the white tablecloth. "Let's go," she says. "You seem tired. Are you all right?"

"Fine." He downs the last of his brandy. "Why wouldn't I be?" He stares at her, as if daring her to continue, his heart pounding. She looks across the table at him, her jaw set, eyes narrowed, her expression like a clenched fist ready to strike out. *Now*, he thinks, *now*, bracing himself for the first blow, *now*.

But her eyes slide away from his and her expression relaxes into a blank smile addressed to no one in particular. He feels simultaneously let off the hook and let down. She stands up and slings her handbag over her shoulder. "Coming?"

Outside, the evening air is surprisingly cool. Molly shivers and Evan puts his arm around her shoulder and pulls her toward him as they make their way back to the hotel. The stream of traffic has dwindled to a trickle, and the night seems almost peaceful. The dark shape of the mountain squats in the distance. The wine and the brandy have dulled his nerves; he thinks maybe he will be able to sleep tonight. But as they cross the hotel lobby, past the cocktail lounge, Molly nudges him in the ribs and says, "Look." He looks over, into the dim interior of the bar, and sees Delia sitting at a small round table with the man from the restaurant. Although Evan has imagined this very scenario, it comes now as a total shock, like a wave of icy water. Delia's back is to him, so he can't read her expression. She doesn't see them, although the man looks up, and Evan sees the click of recognition in his eyes. He waits for the man to say, "There are your friends," and for Delia to turn and wave, but the man apparently says nothing of the sort.

"Want to join them?" Evan says.

Molly laughs. "I don't think she needs us." She links her arm through his, shepherding him toward their room.

In the darkness, lying next to Molly, who is out like a light, Evan checks the luminous dial of his watch every few minutes, wondering what they are doing. Now the man is paying the bill. Now they are strolling toward his hotel room. Now he is . . . Later he hears voices, male and female, murmuring in the hallway. Delia's muffled laugh. He has all he can do to keep himself from flinging open the door and ordering Delia inside like an angry father. Or a jealous husband. But what right does he have to do such a thing? So he just lies there, jaw clenched, not daring to breathe, until he hears a door open and shut and the thud of footsteps padding off down the hall. He imagines the sound of water running in the sink as Delia brushes her teeth—more musical than Handel's *Water Music*. In the hallway, right outside his door, the footsteps pause for a long moment and then continue on. Smiling to himself in the dark, Evan feels almost sorry for the guy.

THE PLAN IS TO STOP AT SAN FRANCISCO DE Asis Church, in Ranchos de Taos, drive down to Santa Fe for lunch, and continue on to the airport in Albuquerque. After a rushed breakfast in the hotel coffee shop, they settle their bill and load their bags into the trunk of the Ford. As usual, Molly drives and he sits in the back seat, skimming the guidebook. Delia's long hair is caught up in a neat ponytail, exposing her bare neck, which is paler than the rest of her, more vulnerable-looking. Evan dares to reach out and tuck in the label of her T-shirt, which is sticking up. The two women discuss a design project they are both going to be working on when they return home. Evan wants to ask about the man in the bar but doesn't trust himself to strike the appropriately casual, big-brotherly tone.

The ride to Ranchos de Taos is short. When they pull into the dirt parking lot, the church takes him by surprise. Although he has thumbed through an entire book of paintings of the church in the hotel gift shop, its simple beauty seems fresh and pure in the early-morning light. His spirits lift. As the three of them make their way across the dusty lot toward the church, Molly unscrews the lens cap of her camera and hands it to Evan to put in his pocket for safekeeping.

"I'd like to see the mystery painting," Evan says, pausing by the parish office. "I've read about it." They look at Delia, who nods agreeably. "They're supposed to have a little slide show and everything."

"Okay," Molly shrugs. "Why don't you two go see it and I'll meet you at the church?"

"You're not interested?" Delia asks.

"I've already seen it," Molly says. "But you two should go. It's definitely worth seeing."

Molly walks on ahead and the guide ushers Evan and Delia inside to a small viewing room with folding chairs lined up in rows. They are the only ones in the room. The guide asks them where they are from and whether they have any children. When Evan says, "Two daughters," the guide nods and smiles at Delia, assuming that she is the mother. After a couple of minutes of stiff small talk, the man glances at his watch and says it is time to begin. He walks over and switches off the lights. For a moment the room is pitch-black. Then the first slide lights up the screen. The familiar voice of educational filmstrips tells them the history of the church as the slides click on and off, a tad too slowly, leaving just enough time between images for boredom to set in. They learn how adobe bricks are made. They learn who painted the *retablos* and that the parish has undertaken the arduous task of restoration. Like a little kid waiting for the magic act to begin, Evan shifts restlessly in his uncomfortable chair, anxious to get to the part about the mystery painting.

Finally, after what seems like hours, a slide of the painting flashes on the screen. Beside him, in the dark-

ness, he can feel Delia snap to attention as the narrator launches into his droning explanation of the painting's mystery.

"What makes this painting so unusual," the narrator says, "is the fact that although in daylight it portrays the barefoot Christ on a shore in Galilee, in complete darkness the portrait becomes luminescent, the figure seems to become three-dimensional, and a cross appears over the left shoulder of Jesus." The narrator goes on to say that eminent scientists from all over the world have studied the painting, subjecting it to chemical analysis and Geiger-counter tests, but no scientific explanation has ever been found for the portrait's marvelous luminosity.

At this point the slide show ends and the guide invites the two of them to step forward to view the actual painting. In the darkness the guide's gentle, disembodied voice tells them to be patient; their eyes will need a few minutes to adjust. He says that although some people see the phenomenon very clearly, other people have difficulty seeing it, which makes Evan strain his eyes in the dark, as if this were some test that he is determined to pass. The guide steps discreetly out of the room, leaving them to experience this religious miracle in privacy.

It feels eerie, spooky, standing there alone in the dark silence, which both of them seem reluctant to break. Then, just as he is convinced that nothing is going to happen, the background begins to take on a strange glow, the figure seems to come forward, and he sees it: the dark shadow of the cross. He is surprised, considering how irreligious he is, to feel the hairs tingling on the back of his neck, and at the same moment Delia reaches for his hand. The image is not steady. It pulses in and out of focus, teasingly. Delia rests her head against his chest and he wraps his arms around her. When she presses against him, he feels a glow spreading through him like the mysterious glow of the painting.

"Oh, God," she says, miserably, "goddamn it. What the hell are we going to do?"

As if rebuking her profanity, the guide bustles back into the room and flicks on the overhead light. Heart pounding, palms sweating, Evan blinks in the sudden bright glare. Delia takes a circumspect step away from him and fishes her dark glasses out of her purse. Standing there in front of the blank screen, he feels as if they are characters in some corny old B movie. He can't think of

anything to say that doesn't sound like some hack wrote it. Despite the fact that he still feels the glow burning inside him, where it is dark and safe.

On the way out Evan drops a five-dollar bill into the offering box. Blinking in the bright sunshine, they make their way slowly across the dirt parking lot to the church, not saying anything, threading their way through the handful of dusty cars with out-of-state plates.

"There she is," Delia says, pointing.

Molly waves and smiles. She is standing in the courtyard of the church, in front of a tall wooden cross. "How was it?" she says, walking toward them. "Did you see it?" She hums the theme from *The Twilight Zone* and laughs.

"I saw it," Delia says. "Pretty weird."

Evan just nods.



"Really? You really saw it?" Molly's smile fades and she looks so wistful that Evan rests his hand lightly on her shoulder. "I never saw it," she says. "I couldn't see a damn thing."

"It was pretty fuzzy," Delia says consolingly. "It was probably all in our heads. Some sort of hypnotic suggestion."

Molly shrugs, squinting into the viewfinder, taking a couple of steps backward and adjusting the focus. "You two stand over there," she orders. "In front of the cross."

"Just what the world needs," Evan says with a sigh. "Another picture of this church." But he obediently trudges over and stands next to Delia.

"Such a martyr," Molly shakes her head at him through the viewfinder. "Move closer together."

Evan hesitates and then takes a step sideways and boldly puts his arm around Delia's waist. He feels her stiffen, and then, after a moment's hesitation, she puts her arm around his waist.

"That's good," Molly nods.

Beside him Delia lets out a sigh.

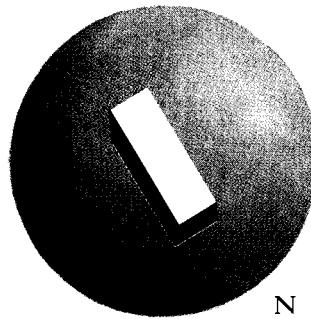
"Now, do you think you could manage a smile?"

Evan frowns and glares at Molly. For a moment he hates her for being so hopelessly dense, so willfully blind, and as the camera shutter clicks, he has a fantasy, a wild hope, that when the picture is developed, this passion that feels to him so palpable will miraculously have taken shape on the negative—some dark shadow of love that defies the scientists' explanations and his own faint-hearted denials. *Now*, he thinks, bracing himself, *now*. □

The United States showed the world how a government could foster the freedom required for basic science research, the results of which can be negligible or earthshaking. That freedom—and America's technological lead—have eroded at the same time

MANAGING THE UNMANAGEABLE

BY ROBERT P. CREASE AND NICHOLAS P. SAMIOS



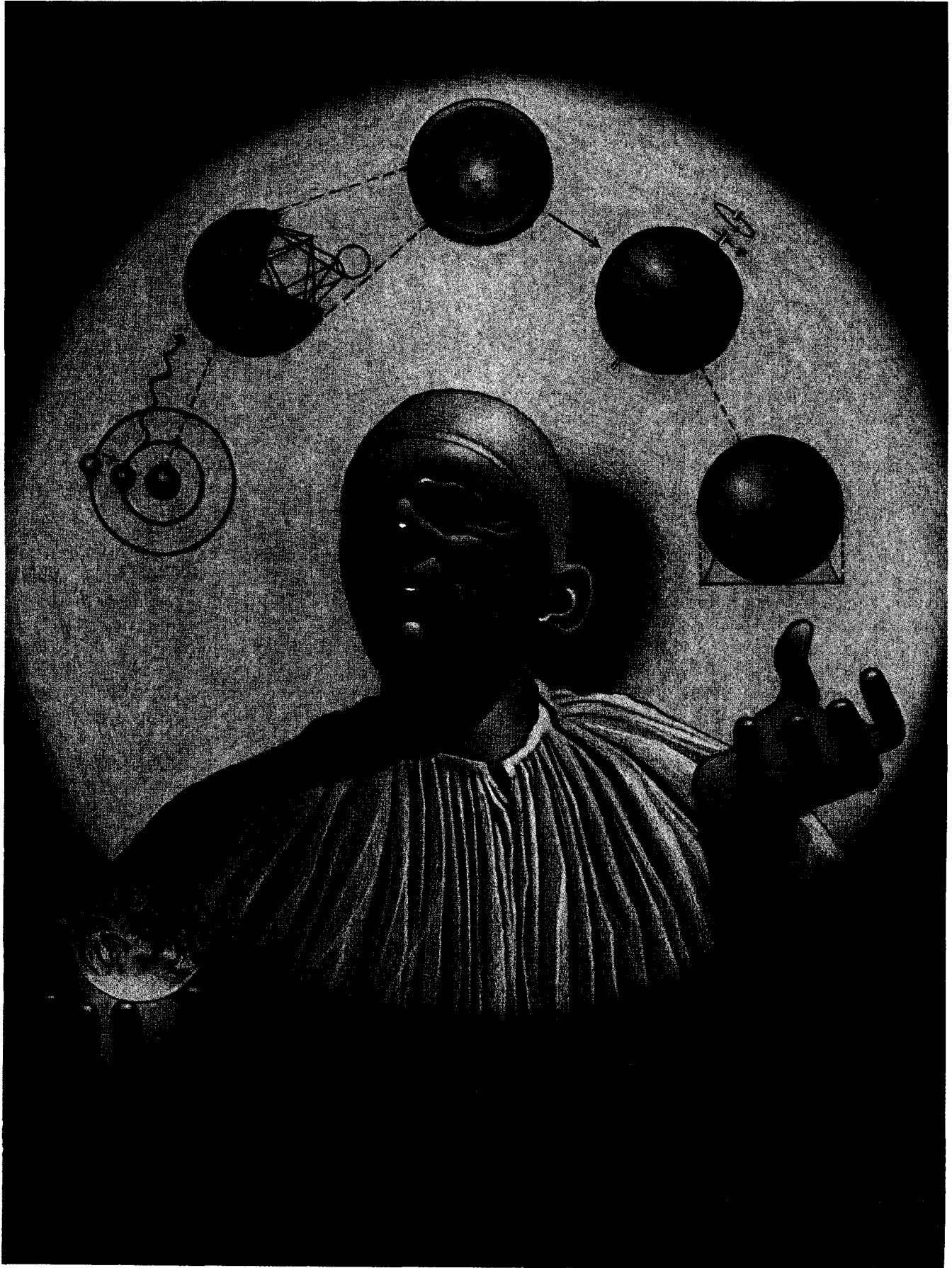
IN THE FALL OF 1942 J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER walked into the Presidio, in San Francisco, to undergo a physical. He was about to be tapped by General Leslie Groves, the head of a top-secret Army project, to establish and administer a classified laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico, that would investigate the possibility of developing an atomic bomb. Oppenheimer and his bosses took it for granted, given the source of the money, the lab's directive, and the need for security, that the facility would follow conventional practice and be militarized. Hence his trip to the Presidio; the physical would be the first step toward being commissioned a lieutenant colonel, which in turn would be the first step toward taking command of the largest and most ambitious scientific project yet attempted.

But Oppenheimer never went through officer training. He never needed to. Key scientists refused to come to Los Alamos under conditions of military hierarchy and bureaucracy, which, they said, were antithetical to the spirit of science. Scientists thrived when they were judged according to competence, not rank. Under pressure, Groves relented. On February 25, 1943, he sent Oppenheimer a letter promising that although the military would provide resources and general direction, for at least the time being Los Alamos would remain civilian, managed by contract with the University of California. Even Groves would come to recognize that this arrangement worked far more effectively than the original, conventional one would have.

The letter set a momentous precedent for relations between the U.S. government and its scientists. When, after the war, the newly founded Atomic Energy Com-

mission set up a string of national laboratories, it chose to manage them according to a similar scheme, called administrative contracting, in which independent managers were hired, often universities or similar nonprofit organizations. The system was viewed as essential to the special environment needed for basic research, which, unlike applied research, seeks an understanding of the structures of nature for its own sake. Partly as a result, the United States forged ahead of other nations in postwar science and in the technology that derived from it.

Today that innovative and unique system is in jeopardy, threatened by a tendency to manage federal undertakings of all kinds, including scientific projects, as though they were businesses—constrained by business procedures and requirements and responsive to business incentives and pressures. Although we will focus on the problems of the national laboratories, owing to our familiarity with them, we believe that similar management problems are or soon will be experienced in connection with large government-sponsored scientific projects in other branches of science. The impact on science has gone virtually unnoticed by the public, because it has



occurred in a series of tiny steps, no single one of which has been large enough to attract attention. But it is oppressively evident to those who work inside the national laboratories. The attempt to treat basic research as a business has slowly changed the structure and spirit of these laboratories, and begun to strip away the special protection this country once accorded them and to taint the fragile atmosphere needed for them to thrive. At a time of widespread lamentations about the loss of U.S. technological competitiveness, it is ironic that we are destroying one of the most important means by which we established that technological competitiveness in the first place.

Changing the World by Chance

ALTHOUGH BASIC AND APPLIED RESEARCH ARE OFTEN intertwined in practice, their intellectual missions are distinct. Basic research aims to recognize previously unknown structures of nature, whereas applied research aims to make some already known process possible or more effective. The structures of nature recognized in basic research may have practical applications, but whether they do or not, and if so of what type, are generally not the professional concern of the basic researcher. At the beginning of this century a popular postprandial toast around the Cavendish Laboratory of Cambridge University, in England, was, "The electron: may it never be of any use to anybody!" That wish, as the physicist Abraham Pais once wryly remarked, was unfulfilled. A few decades earlier, during an inspection of the Royal Institution, in London, a skeptical William Gladstone questioned the potential value of electricity. "Sir," came the waggish riposte, "someday you will tax it!"

The American sociologist Robert Merton once devoted an essay to what he called "the unanticipated consequences of purposive social action." Human action, he wrote, often brings about processes or results that are unintended by the actors, and these can affect either the actors or society as a whole, and can be beneficial or not. Although Merton was specifically discussing social action, his point is equally true of scientific research. But whereas most human action seeks to avoid unanticipated consequences, basic research courts them. Many discoveries are unsurprising, expected outcomes of deliberate research programs. Nevertheless, basic researchers are always aware of the possibility of—and often hope for—novel developments. The British theoretical physicist P.A.M. Dirac, who devised the "Dirac equation," which accounts in a comprehensive way for the behavior of the electron, used to say that his equation was smarter than he was, because it contained solutions to problems of which he was unaware. Moreover, historical illustrations of unintended practical consequences of discoveries are legion. We will cite a few examples to illustrate the mun-

danity of unforeseen consequences in discoveries of genuinely new structures of nature.

Improving medical techniques was hardly on the mind of the German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen as he tinkered with cathode-ray tubes in November of 1895. But when he explored the curious fact that a fluorescent screen near his apparatus was glowing, contrary to all expectations, he ended up discovering a wholly new phenomenon of nature, which he called x-rays. Within three months they had been used to examine bone fractures. His discovery triggered a series of other important scientific discoveries, such as that of radioactivity.

"I don't think the idea of helping suffering humanity ever entered our minds," Howard Florey, of Oxford's Dunn School of Pathology, once recalled of the moment in the late 1930s when he and his colleague Ernest Chain began a survey of antibacterial mechanisms. But on their list of microbes to study was penicillin, which had been discovered accidentally only a few years before but whose antibacterial properties had been neglected. Much of modern medicine is based on a substance whose discovery and development were matters of sheer chance and disinterested academic research.

"Moonshine," responded the British scientist Ernst Rutherford, who discovered the nucleus in 1911, to the suggestion that energy might be obtained from it. Atomic energy was equally far from the thoughts of the Italian physicist Enrico Fermi when, in 1934, he began bombarding the nuclei of all known elements with neutrons, and was puzzled by the results he achieved with the heaviest known element, uranium. The German scientists Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann were trying to make sense of Fermi's odd results when, at the end of 1938, they announced that barium was a by-product of such bombardments. A month later two other German researchers, Otto Frisch and Lise Meitner, were only trying to explain *that* puzzling result when they suggested that uranium nuclei could split, or "fission," with a concomitant release of energy. The outcome of all this puzzle-solving, it hardly needs mentioning, transformed the world.

The unintended consequences of scientific research can reach far beyond science and technology, to have a cultural impact as well. One remarkable and well-documented example is the profound effect that telescopic astronomy had on Milton's poetry, and in particular on his imaginative depiction of the space of the universe in *Paradise Lost*. Some three hundred years later one might consider how x-rays, CAT scans, and radio telescopes have further altered human perception and imagination. It is unfortunate that the beneficial effects of scientific discoveries often become so thoroughly integrated into the world that they are taken for granted, as part of its warp and woof, whereas the pernicious applications of scientific discoveries are often portrayed as representative of scientific activity itself. Pessimists anticipate that basic research will deliver new forms of power to be so-

cially abused; optimists anticipate a reform of social structures which will eliminate such abuses.

Temperamentally, scientists tend to be optimists, and if pressed will defend their work by saying that in the long run, at least, the effects of science are beneficial. But arguments about the value of basic research that are based on anticipations of either social utility or harm are weak, because they are based on analogy: the future will be like the past. A deeper motive for basic research is that it ultimately leads not just to understanding of the structure of nature but to self-understanding as well. What is nature? and Who are we? are not distinguishable questions. "Whatever nature has in store for mankind, unpleasant as it may be," Fermi once said, "men must accept, for ignorance is never better than knowledge."

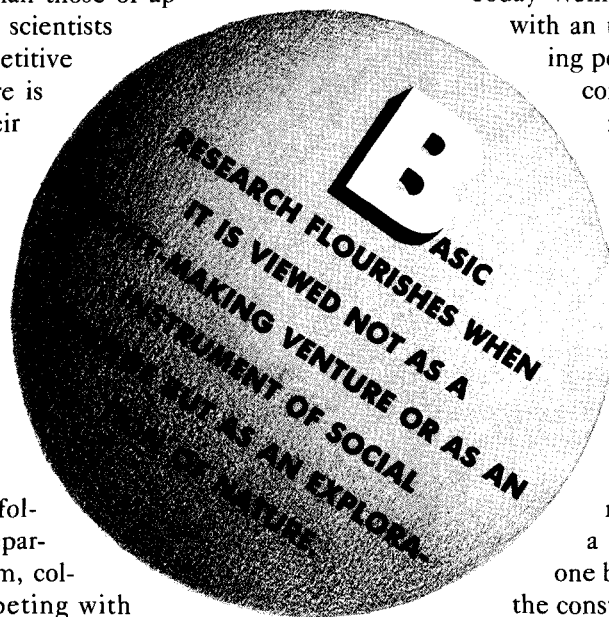
An Odd System That Worked

THE PHRASE "MANAGING BASIC SCIENCE" MIGHT at first seem oxymoronic, like the oft-repeated jest about "military intelligence." Management is the effective coordination of resources and personnel toward a particular end; how can one coordinate an activity whose end is unforeseen and unforeseeable? Nevertheless, basic science stagnates when it is not effectively supervised. Salaries of basic scientists, for instance, are lower than those of applied scientists. Basic scientists cannot be paid competitive salaries, because there is no guarantee that their work is marketable; and even when it eventually happens to be so, the returns are usually too far in the future to affect them. Nevertheless, many extremely bright people find that the relative freedom to follow one's nose in preparing a research program, collaborating and competing with smart and dedicated colleagues, and the thrill of the prospect of making fundamental discoveries are ample compensation for unequal pay.

Creating and maintaining a healthy scientific culture is the aim of science management, and it involves tending to both the intellectual and the institutional conditions of basic research. The intellectual condition is freedom of inquiry—allowing and even encouraging scientists to follow new paths should they open up, to risk dead ends, to shift direction abruptly on a hunch. The institutional

condition of basic science is a laboratory environment that facilitates such freedom of inquiry. A laboratory is more than a collection of equipment and the space to house it. It is a theater in which experiments are performed and witnessed, and like theaters of the more familiar kind, it is specially built for that purpose. Providing such environments was less complicated in the first few decades of this century, when scientists worked alone or in groups of twos and threes, when important laboratory skills were glassblowing and carpentry, and when one required no more than an ordinary room in which to perform an experiment. At that time laboratory equipment was workbench-sized and relatively inexpensive, and much of it was built by the researchers themselves; until the 1930s the first morning task for a physicist who needed power supplies often was to build batteries. With the Manhattan Project and the postwar establishment of the national laboratory system, however, all that changed. "Little Science" became "Big Science," in the words of Alvin Weinberg, a former director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, in Tennessee. Researchers might work in teams not of twos or threes but of dozens and even hundreds; the cost of experiments reached not tens of thousands but hundreds of millions of dollars. Making equipment was subcontracted to industry, and the space to house it might require hangar-sized buildings.

Today Weinberg's phrase is unfortunately associated with an unproductive debate about science funding policy in which "Big Science" often carries connotations similar to those of "Big Business." The suggestion is that large scientific projects unfairly monopolize scientific capital, squeezing out the little guy who might make valuable innovations if given a chance. But the analogy is false. Knowledge generated by large scientific projects, unlike the profits of large corporations, becomes the property of the entire community and restructures the scientific background against which research teams large and small plan and execute new ventures. Moreover, "Big Science" is a general term whose meaning varies from one branch of science to another. It can refer to the construction of large instruments used by only a small fraction of the community at once, as in astronomy; large equipment complexes serving many individuals simultaneously; as in materials science; or the coordination of the work of numerous small research teams, as in biology. In each case the funding needs, the size and role of research groups, and the information flow between project users and the wider scientific community is different. It is thus meaningless to debate the value of Big Science in general; projects must be judged on an individual basis.



Nevertheless, the *management* problems of such large-scale projects are similar, and therefore the experience of high-energy physics, in which such problems were first felt, is likely to be emblematic. Big Science meant that high-energy physics outgrew the environment single universities could provide. The national laboratories had a special mission: to provide favorable environments in which such science could continue to grow. But the new scientific theaters had vastly different requirements from those of just a decade or so earlier. It was not simply a matter of bigger equipment, along with the need for more-extensive construction and planning. The new laboratories also required things like offices for procurement, maintenance, health and safety, security, architectural planning, and budget. They needed departments for photography, technical information, public information, and legal counsel. The commitment to maintaining such a large organization inevitably posed a threat to the freedom and flexibility of the basic research that was supposed to be carried out. Science management had become a problem—one that grew with the size of the laboratories.

The solution adopted was the administrative contract. Administrative contracts date from the era of the Atomic Energy Act of 1946, and the historic compromise it effected between the U.S. government and the U.S. physics community. The government was trying to balance its desire for a first-class scientific program with its desire for secrecy and control of the direction of nuclear-reactor technology. The physics community wanted the nuclear reactors and particle accelerators that were soon to become fundamental tools of Big Science, but also wanted to work independent of the government, which was the only conceivable source of funds. Administrative contracts permitted the government to participate in science while preserving the atmosphere of university laboratories.

Administrative contracts were soon written establishing several national laboratories, some through the reorganization of existing labs: Brookhaven National Laboratory, on Long Island, New York (the contractor was Associated Universities, Inc., a nonprofit group of universities in the region); Berkeley Radiation Laboratory, in Berkeley, California (University of California), now called Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory; Argonne National Laboratory, outside Chicago (University of Chicago); and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (built largely by Du Pont and now run by Martin Marietta). In addition to these basic-research facilities, a string of laboratories oriented toward military projects were also set up under administrative contract. Besides Los Alamos (University of California), these included Livermore Laboratory, in Livermore, California (also the University of California), now called Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory; and Sandia Laboratories, in Albuquerque, New Mexico (AT&T, through a subsidiary, the Sandia Corporation).

When the contractor was a university or similar nonprofit organization, it received a management fee to cover its costs. Commercial companies came to receive an "award fee" along with reimbursement for their costs, in an amount depending on a judgment about the effectiveness of the management in any given year. The commercial companies participated not for the money but partly in order to contribute to the good of the country, partly to provide a training ground for employees, and partly to benefit from the transfer of new technology. The Sandia Corporation, for instance, has managed the Sandia Laboratories for forty years without any award fee.

The arrangement worked so well that when a group of European nations founded CERN, a laboratory in Geneva, in 1953, its management was patterned after the administrative contracts of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). "It is the desire of the Commission," a typical contract stated at the outset, "to procure for the Government managerial skill and responsibility which will permit flexibility in administrative controls and freedom from detailed supervision." Many of these contracts carried what became known as the sweetness-and-light clause: "It is the intent of the Commission and the Contractor that this agreement shall be carried on in a spirit of partnership and friendly cooperation with a maximum of effort and common sense in achieving their common objectives."

The special character of administrative contracts can best be seen by comparing them with the two most common types of government contracts, fixed-price and cost-plus-fixed-fee. Suppose, for instance, that the government wants to buy Army hats. It draws up specifications, determines which sizes and colors it wants, and then solicits bids. If the winner of the contract, a fixed-price one, cannot produce the specified hats on budget, it must bear the additional cost itself or renegotiate the contract. Cost-plus-fixed-fee contracts cover situations where the scope of the work precludes a basis for determining a fixed price. Suppose the government wants a series of metals to be evaluated for use in space vehicles. It might produce a detailed description of the tests it wants done, prescribing how long the process is to take, how often it will want to receive reports, and so on, and invite interested parties to negotiate a contract in which the government agrees to pay whatever costs are incurred plus a fixed fee. In both kinds of contracts the aim is to pin the contractor down to as many specifics as possible. Both presuppose a conventional buyer-seller relationship.

Administrative contracts envision an entirely different relationship between contractee and contractor, one that is essentially collaborative. It is taken for granted, for instance, that the relationship will be long-term; contractors are formally reviewed after five years but do not necessarily have to undergo a competitive rebidding process. Although the AEC determined its laboratories' basic direction, approved long-range plans, and played an impor-

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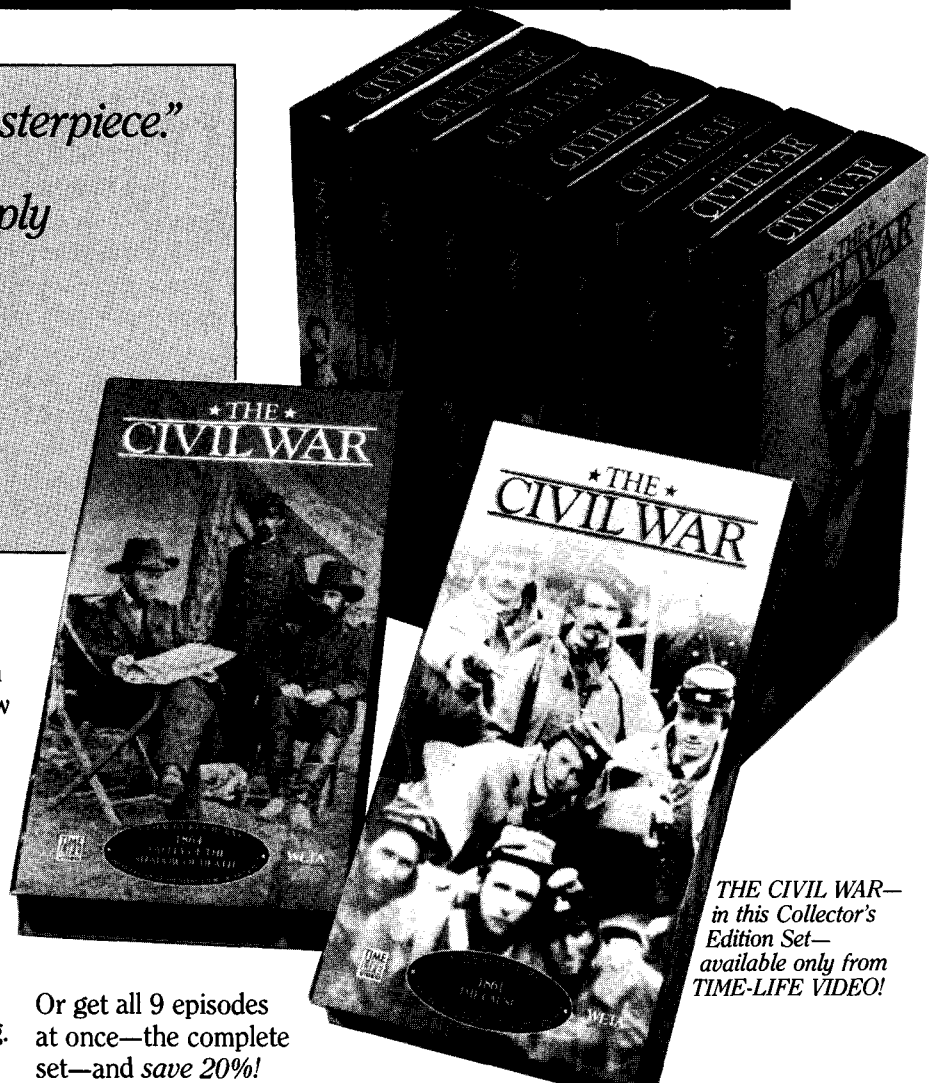
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tant role in health and safety policies, other management issues were the responsibility of the contractor, who was allowed maximum flexibility in deciding them.

The Intrusion of Bureaucracy and Politics

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRACTS WERE CREATED IN the knowledge that special management methods are required by the special environment in which basic research thrives. Yet the fruits of basic research—and their obvious ability to transform society—have made it tempting for the government to think that basic research can and should be managed for social ends, and that therefore conventional management models and methods can and should be applied to it. Little by little the government has succumbed to this temptation, and has come to adopt the perspective that basic-research facilities can be operated just like other corporate entities. The result has been to erode two fundamental kinds of independence originally granted to contractors: the relative independence from bureaucratic restrictions applied to other federal agencies, and the relative independence from political pressures.

The federal government long ago established a system of regulations to cover the contracting and purchasing functions of its agencies and any subcontracting carried out by those agencies. The reasons for doing so include the government's interest in preventing collusion, fraud, incompetence, and inefficiency, and its interest in promoting certain social ends.

The first administrative contracts, however, exempted the laboratories from such provisions. The promotion rules, salary structures, and personnel regulations of civil service were considered inappropriate to the laboratory environment. Because scientists on the research frontier need to be able to respond quickly to new developments, the elaborate accounting and procurement practices required of government agencies were also thought inappropriate. For such reasons, the contractors who managed the labs were bound by few of the restrictions that were standard in other government contracts, except for basic health and safety provisions. That is not to say that the contractors were given carte blanche; they were accountable for their work through periodic reviews whose conclusions were made available in publicly released reports. But the contractors were freed of the ordinary bureaucratic burdens placed on federal agencies.

That freedom did not last long. Within a few years of the signing of the first administrative contracts many of the boiler-plate provisions of standard government contracts were being written into administrative contracts. These were not unreasonable, and contractors did not find them burdensome. But severer restrictions were applied, through a process known in the jargon as "flow-down," by which restrictive requirements and regulations in one contract tend to flow into others. The first

flow-downs came through the AEC, which wrote procurement regulations into its standard contracts. It was often unclear both to the laboratories and to their Washington contract supervisors which of the AEC regulations had to be followed by the laboratories in subcontracting. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that the ultimate court of appeal for contract disputes with the government is the General Accounting Office, which had the right to examine all AEC contracts and subcontracts to evaluate their legality.

Over time the GAO's authority grew, as did the number of its regulations and the penalties for breaking its rules. Inevitably contractors began to play it safe and adopt the conventional contracting practices even when not technically necessary.

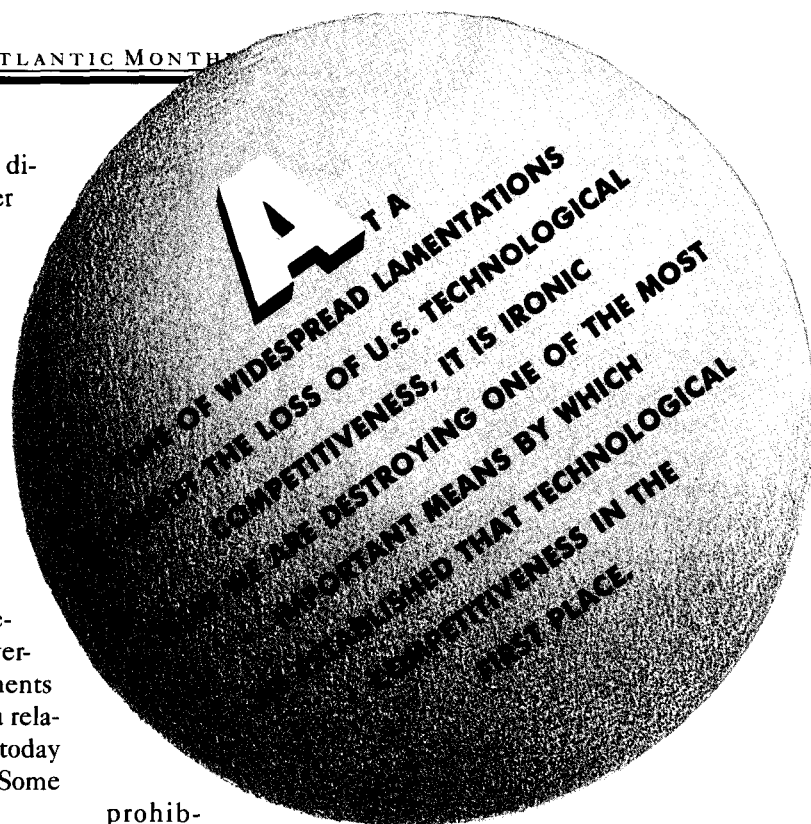
AEC procurement regulations were but one source of flow-down. Around 1960 a second source appeared with the creation of a set of federal procurement regulations. Once again, it was frequently unclear both to the laboratory managers and to contract administrators which regulations were to be applied to the administrative contracts; once again, the fact that the GAO had the final say discouraged the laboratories from making aggressive and flexible contracting decisions.

In 1975 the AEC ceased to be, and most of its functions were taken over by the short-lived Energy Research and Development Administration, which in turn was superseded by the Department of Energy, in 1977. The flow-down now became a torrent, thanks to a change in the character of the agency overseeing the laboratories. The AEC staff had always included a number of scientists who engaged in basic research, and the agency's five commissioners had always included at least one basic scientist. The professional staff of the AEC, like those of the Tennessee Valley Authority, the FBI, and a few other agencies, was exempt from civil-service requirements, meaning that it had a great deal of flexibility in selecting and assigning laboratory personnel. The Department of Energy, however, has never had a basic scientist at its helm, and is staffed largely by officials with little or no familiarity with basic research and its particular requirements. People arrived at the new agency with no awareness of the reason why administrative contracts had been established in the first place and no experience in handling them, and expected that the contractors who ran the national labs would follow the same regulations as everyone else.

In 1982 an advisory panel reported to the DOE that "the laboratories have become grossly overburdened with detailed reporting and other paperwork requirements, the utility of which frequently is not apparent and which unnecessarily divert resources from their research and development missions"; nothing, however, was done in response to the complaint. Similar conclusions were reached in subsequent years, with similar outcomes, by a presidential commission and a second advisory panel.

The result is that the national laboratories have to divert an increasing portion of their resources in order to satisfy federal bureaucratic provisions from which they were meant to be exempt. It is a question not of science administration having to grow in scale with the size of scientific projects but of the breakdown of the independence that the administrative-contract system was designed to safeguard. Three decades ago the procurement regulations that bound laboratories were available in a small booklet. Today each lab has several feet of "DOE orders," with additional ones arriving weekly. In the past ten years alone the budget departments at the national laboratories have doubled—not because they need additional help in preparing the budgets but because of the DOE's never-ending requests for information. Whereas agreements between contractors and the government aimed at a relationship of "sweetness and light" forty years ago, today the relationship is described as "at arm's length." Some examples:

- The DOE requires laboratory directors to approve each request for international-travel funds, and if the requests are filed within thirty days of the start of the proposed trip, they must be approved by the appropriate DOE offices in Washington. This regulation is absurd. Given the international character of contemporary science, international conferences are necessarily one of its important tools. Brookhaven scientists, for instance, make about 300 foreign-travel applications a year. DOE regulations require so much reporting and follow-up that the Brookhaven administration includes two people who work full-time to process applications.
- Following a recommendation of the 1982 advisory panel, the DOE established a program to provide lab directors with seed money for promoting new initiatives. The program has led to a number of important new research efforts that otherwise would have been delayed or abandoned. Last year, however, some scientists at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory attempted to use the program to develop an idea to visit Mars using inflatable spacecraft. The plan completely bypassed input from NASA. Angered, Congress retaliated by eliminating the new-initiatives program. Ultimately it was restored, but with additional procedures and restrictions. Whatever one's opinion of space exploration, the story illustrates a bureaucratic tendency to punish all labs for an action at one.
- Last year Brookhaven couldn't get its integrated circuits made. Custom semiconductor chips are a component of experimental devices and instrumentation of all sorts. For a laboratory to have no new chips is something akin to a hospital's running out of penicillin. Integrated circuits are prohibitively expensive for a laboratory unless bought jointly with other institutions. When Brookhaven joined a consortium of others to acquire chips, however, some officials read the DOE requirements as



prohibiting such a cooperative venture because of certain restrictions on submitting a purchase order to private industry. The laboratory spent a year tinkering with the agreement to make it valid, only then determining that the officials were merely playing it safe with the DOE requirements. Before the matter was straightened out, several major projects ground to a halt.

Revitalizing Scientific Culture

IT WAS ONE INTENTION OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY ACT to keep political hands off the basic-research budget as much as possible. One part of the act, for instance, provided for the evaluation and selection of research proposals by independent panels of scientists. Another sought to insulate the selected proposals and expedite the budgetary approval needed from Congress by the creation of a single congressional committee to oversee the basic-research budget, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy—the only permanent joint committee with continuing legislative responsibility ever created. Many in and out of Congress were jealous of the joint committee's tremendous power. But throughout its tenure the joint committee respected the independence of the laboratories in conveying to the scientific community merely general areas of government concern, and insisting on the peer review of programs meant to address these concerns.

The demise of the AEC meant the eventual dissolution of the joint committee, which left the basic-research budget to be parceled out by a complex network of committees with overlapping jurisdictions. The absence of a single committee with a continuing vision exposed the basic-research budget to the political whims of succes-

sive presidential administrations. Laboratory programs established by one administration have been axed by the next.

Moreover, the parceling out of the basic-research budget also meant a growing vulnerability to pork-barreling, which can be defined as any non-peer-reviewed and -approved project. During the lifespan of the joint committee a few minor pork projects had made it into the budget, but the committee had aggressively kept the lid on. The lid opened, however, during the Reagan Administration. In 1982 George Keyworth, the presidential science adviser, apparently at the request of certain California constituents, attempted to bypass the peer-review process and insert funds for a National Center for Advanced Materials (NCAM, but soon referred to as NSCAM) directly into the DOE budget as a "presidential initiative." A \$140 million project, it would have been the largest undertaking ever in materials science. A storm of protest led Congress to defer the project temporarily, but much of it has been reinstated.

After that episode Congress lost the restraint with which it had traditionally approached the basic-research budget. If presidential initiatives were possible, it was argued, so were congressional initiatives, and universities began to lobby Congress directly for them. In 1983 Cassidy & Associates, a lobbying firm, succeeded in getting Congress to earmark \$5 million of the DOE budget for a chemistry building for one of its clients, Columbia University. The same year the firm snagged another \$5 million for a vitreous-state research laboratory at Catholic University, in Washington, D.C. Cassidy has become the lobbyist of choice for universities. It is estimated that in the four-year period from 1982 to 1986 the funds earmarked for pork projects bypassing the peer-review process soared from \$2 million to \$236 million.

Behind the proliferation of bureaucracy and politics is a deep misunderstanding of the scientific process, in which basic research is viewed as essentially a corporate undertaking and hence something that can be manipulated for profit or social ends. Basic research flourishes—and society reaps the greatest benefits—when it is viewed not as a profit-making venture or as an instrument of social change but as an exploration of nature. To provide basic research with the special conditions appropriate to its execution amounts not to granting it a special status but simply to recognizing what it is and what are the conditions under which it should be done.

The hidden cost of imposing on basic research the same procurement procedures, budgetary constraints, and general regulations imposed on other areas of the federal bureaucracy is the sharp reduction of that flexibility which keeps basic research vital. We appear to be losing our technological leadership, and if we are not careful, we may lose our scientific leadership as well. It is true that the United States still holds the lion's share of science Nobel Prizes awarded since the Second World

War. But we may be riding on past accomplishments. The 1990 Nobel in physics was won by three Americans for work done two decades ago, the 1989 prize by an American for work done in the 1940s, the 1988 prize by three Americans for work done a quarter century ago. In the past decade most of the physics Nobels awarded for recent efforts have gone to Europeans.

Recently the Department of Energy has taken some promising steps. In the current year's budget, for instance, it has recognized basic research in science as a category in its own right, which it calls "Fortifying Foundations"; in previous years the budget for basic research in science was classified under "Energy Research & Development." But much more needs to be done. We propose the following steps:

- Return to the original administrative-contract idea of flexibility and independence. For instance, the number of congressional committees through which the basic-research budget has to pass should be limited, and many accounting and procurement requirements eliminated. One cannot run science as a procurement activity.
- Establish a long-term science policy for basic research, identifying areas of interest and opportunity, and couple this with a two-year funding plan. The long-term policy would prevent the basic-research budget from fluctuating and make programs more effective by buffering them against the whims of Congress and of new administrations. A mechanism for establishing such a policy already exists, in the form of national science advisory and DOE committees; their mandate should be extended. Two years of funding cannot be guaranteed, since Congress makes only one-year appropriations; nevertheless, planning funding according to that time frame would be an improvement over the present system. Since congressional project additions are a way of life, they will continue. However, they should be budgetary add-ons and not come at the expense of ongoing programs.
- Reduce the number of DOE orders to laboratories, and end the bureaucratic mentality that formulates a new rule following every offense. Much more effective would be to treat the individual case first. Each DOE institution—and, indeed, each of the national laboratories—is unique. Each has different facilities, skills, styles, personnel, problems, and goals. A solution to a problem at one lab may not work and may even be harmful at another.

Genuine scientific culture, like all human culture, is achieved through organic growth rather than the execution of a plan. One cannot suddenly decide to buy a forefront scientific program and then go out and exploit it. Do we demand of basic research that it be of potential social or military use? Do we insist that it pay for itself? Or do we try to foster in those who do science the ability to follow their intuitions about how the world works? On the answers we give to such questions depends the future of science in the United States. □



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

BLAISE PASCAL AND RENÉ DESCARTES

ON A SEPTEMBER morning in 1647 (Louis XIV, age nine, was King) a carriage drew up before the Paris house of the Pascal family, and M. René Descartes got out. He looked like a crafty peasant. In fact, at fifty-one, he was the most prominent mathematician-philosopher of his day. His famed *Discourse* divided French intellectuals into two camps—one either was or was not a “Cartesian.”

Blaise Pascal, age twenty-four, was not. He had no argument with Descartes’s axiom “I think, therefore I am,” but he was less certain about the ability of reason to prove *a)* the existence of God or *b)* the nonexistence of a vacuum in nature. Surely God was felt, not reasoned; and as for the vacuum—he had himself only recently conducted experiments that seemed to verify its existence. Still, he was pleased when Descartes asked to meet him, and although Pascal was ill, a visit was arranged.

Also present that morning were Professor Roberval, of the Collège de France, a voluble anti-Cartesian, and

Pascal’s younger sister Jacqueline. Pascal brought out a calculating machine, his recent invention, and demonstrated its ability to add and subtract. Descartes was impressed. The conversation turned to the vacuum. Pascal described his experiment; Descartes expressed doubt—a polite skirmish that might have ended there, but Roberval had not come for civilities. He injected *his* opinion, and a heated argument ensued. Descartes took his leave.

The next morning, however, he returned—not Descartes the philosopher this time but Descartes the physician. He sat for three hours by his patient’s side, listened to his complaints, examined him, prescribed soups and rest. When Pascal was sick of staying in bed, Descartes said, he would be nearly well. Their views would remain opposed, but it was the kindly doctor as well as the supreme rationalist whom Pascal would later remember, and who may have been in his mind when he observed, “The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of.”

—Nancy Caldwell Sorel



Chromis hover in range of the shelter afforded by a coral head, in Agincourt Reefs, off Port Douglas, Queensland

On the Edge of Down Under

Gobies, gulls, and green turtles on the Great Barrier Reef

by Kenneth Brower

ON LAND, ROCK climbers have a pastime called bouldering. It amounts to fooling around on boulders, practicing your technique. Bouldering in a coral sea is an apotheosis of the terrestrial sport. Recently, after several years away from it, I tried my hand again at coral-bouldering on a "bommie" of the Great Barrier Reef. ("Bommie" is short for *bombora*, an Aboriginal word for a coral head. It is one of the many Australianisms one quickly adopts on the reef. "Groper" is the fish we call grouper. "Trevallies" are jacks. "Dingo fish" are barracuda. To "fossick" is to reef-comb. "Whyles" are whales.)

At the base of the bommie, fifty feet deep, I exhaled through the mouthpiece of my scuba regulator and

watched the quicksilver bubbles wobble up toward the surface. Then I started after them.

Passing myself up the bommie's sheer, swelling wall of *Porites* coral required only a small part of the strength in my fingertips. My legs drifted along behind, uninvolved. A cleaner shrimp saw me coming and retreated into its crevice, waving long antennae. A pair of tiny, translucent pipefish flowed away over the curve of the coralline rock. I folded my arms across my chest. Inertia, and the buoyancy of my wetsuit, increasing as the pressure on it decreased, kept me going upward. Free-climbing was never so free. I laughed a big cloud of bubbles, and the slowed-down, dim-witted sound of underwater laughter resounded in my

ears. At the summit I pushed off lightly and sailed backward into the void. Feeling a mucous slickness on my fingertips, I rubbed them together. I could see the strands of coral mucus there, thin as spider web. That is the other miracle of bouldering here: the boulders are alive.

The Great Barrier Reef is not simple geomorphology. It is a kind of superorganism. A coral reef is an edifice of symbiotic connections: between coral polyps and their resident algae, between cleaner shrimp and the fishes cleaned, between blind burrowing shrimp and the popeyed gobies who serve as their sentinels, among all the encrusting algae, tube worms, sea urchins, crustaceans, bivalves, fish, sea snakes, and sponges that have collab-

orated over millennia to build the reef. Of this outsize variety of life, the Great Barrier Reef is the largest specimen. About 1,250 miles long, composed of 2,500 reef complexes, it is the vastest coral-reef province on earth, the biggest structure created by living things in the known universe. Almost all of it is protected in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, far and away the largest marine sanctuary in any ocean.

My six weeks on the reef began in its least-traveled stretch, the northernmost reefs of the Far Northern Section. From Cairns I flew over fringing reef and unbroken tropical rain forest into Iron Range airstrip, 250 miles north of Queensland's last paved road.

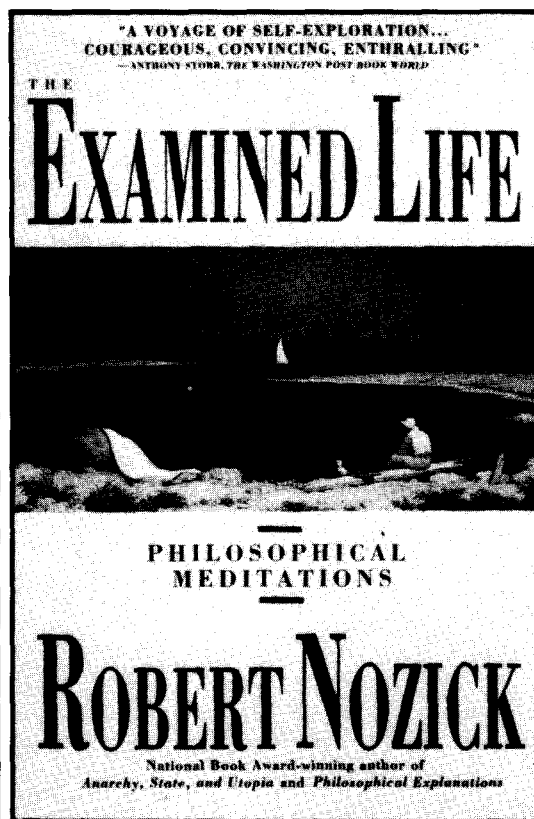
FROM THE LITTLE community of Lockhart River the photographer David Doubilet, our dive-boat captain, and I headed out into the Coral Sea. Five frigate birds soared high above, an escort seeing us eastward. We put the dark green of the mangrove shoreline behind us, and then left behind the outline of Restoration Island, where Captain Bligh restored himself after his difficulties with the mutineers. Ahead opened a blue horizon and a wilderness of reefs.

We made our first dive at a place called Mantis Reef, and then headed northward across Wreck Bay, passing up the Martha Ridgway Reefs and a number of nameless reefs in the vicinity. They were fine reefs, likely, but you can't dive all of the thousands of reefs in the park—not in one lifetime. The Great Barrier Reef, for a diver, is an embarrassment of riches. When we dove again it was at a place the captain called Magic Cave.

The cave was a short tunnel through a wall of coral, sixty feet beneath the surface. A swarm of small neon-blue pullers hung about the western entrance. A current ran out like a pleasant breeze, not enough to impede a diver much, but sufficient to flush out any kicked-up sand. Feather stars—crinoids—fed on the floor and walls. The tentacles of soft corals stirred in the current. Big-eyed squirrelfish swam upside-down along the cave roof. In a world where gravity seems to have little practical meaning, more things are relative, and the cave top had become bottom for the squirrelfish. From the

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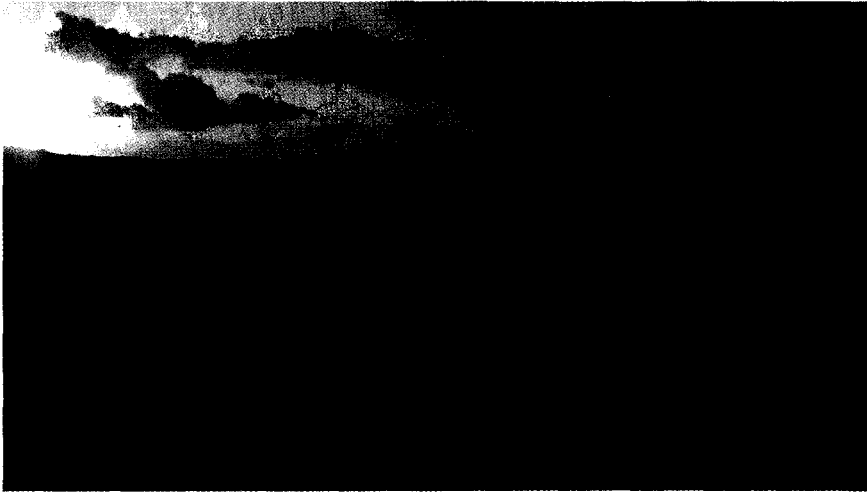
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After a night of egg-laying a green turtle returns to the sea

big-eyed point of view, it was I who was wrong side up.

At the eastern entrance to the tunnel sea fans, a variety of Gorgonian coral, held themselves at right angles to the current. Sea fans have a wonderful two-dimensionality. They are like huge lobate leaves pressed between the pages of a book and forgotten there, nothing left but the veins.

I lay for twenty minutes at the eastern entrance, looking out. It was like sitting in a darkened movie theater, before a vast and luminous screen. White-tip reef sharks passed in the brightness, and horned unicorn fish, and small squads of silvery jacks, and butterfly fish in Technicolor. Two small surgeonfish did a courtship dance, zipping high above their coral head, joining at the zenith, and then racing down again. A pair of huge bumphead parrotfish appeared suddenly. They gave me a start on their arrival, as any big fish will. Their movements were slow, dignified. Their tiny eyes, lying well back of their great bluff foreheads, rotated to watch me. Magic Cave really was magic.

A WEEK LATER WE raised the ruined beacon of Raine Island, our northernmost landfall. Raine is a low sand cay of about seventy-four acres. Its beacon—a tower quarried from coral limestone by convict masons in 1844—was the first navigational aid in Queensland. It dominates the sands of the cay, a vast and trunkless leg of stone in the desert of the Coral Sea. After a week in a horizontal world of reefs, I welcomed the tower's verticality.

Through binoculars I could make out first a cloud of birds circling the tower, then the wheeling dots of individual birds—frigates. Raine is the most important breeding island for seabirds in all Australia. More than 100,000 terns nest there, as do sizable colonies of brown boobies, masked boobies, frigate birds, and reef herons.

Raine is also Australia's most important nesting island for sea turtles. A sea turtle leaves a trail like a one-tread tractor, and not an inch of sand above the tide line went unpatterned by that complicated mark. Of the species that visit the Great Barrier Reef—leatherbacks and ridleys passing through, flatbacks nesting on continental islands, green, loggerhead, and hawksbill turtles nesting out on the coral cays—the most numerous by far are the green turtles, *Chelonia mydas*. These tracks belonged to them.

Green turtles are wanderers, and

turtles hatched on Raine Island are taken by Indonesians, Papua New Guineans, and other Western Pacific islanders. They make up a large part of the harvest of the islanders of the Torres Strait. Scientists have counted 11,000 females going ashore here in a single night.

Late in the morning we went ashore ourselves. A few tardy turtles were still digging nests. Here and there along the horizon of dunes, sand was being heaved against the sky. Dead turtles lay at wide intervals in the dunes. It seemed strange: having survived nearly interminable lives in a cruel sea, they had died sunny and warm on land. *Life out of death* was the message of the Raine Island sands, as I understood it. The female turtles had sacrificed themselves in the struggle to renew the species. Then, walking on, I had to smile. Some of the hulks I took to be dead proved to be alive when I nudged them with my foot. On the other hand, some of the turtles I had judged to be alive turned out to be dead. In *Chelonia mydas* the habit of living is deeply ingrained, and a few turtles had died in poses remarkably lifelike. They did not seem to understand yet that they had expired.

Raising anchor after a day and a half at Raine, we left the island's lee and motored into a sea of small whitecaps from the southeast. The boat was soon taking spray across her foredeck. The beacon fell lower and lower on the horizon. I was searching behind us for the tower when, under the smooth blue slope of a near wave, I saw the olive-green circle of a turtle rising. Its head broke the surface for a breath, and



Fish converge for handouts from a naturalist diver, off Heron Island

dead ahead of it the swell fell to reveal the distant speck of the beacon. Somehow, by navigational methods only they know, turtles find their way home to their native beaches. This one was right on course.

From Raine we worked our way south toward the better-traveled end of the Great Barrier Reef. To port passed an endless procession of reefs: Great Detached Reef, Lagoon Reef, Long Sandy Reef, Second Small Reef, Southern Small Detached Reef, Log Reef, First Small Reef, Bligh Reef, Cat Reef, Tijou Reef. Interspersed among these were many reefs that went nameless. The Great Barrier Reef is so nearly endless that its explorers have run out of epithets.

Below Tijou Reef we began working our way down a series of sand cays marked on the chart only by numbers. The captain and I went ashore for an evening walk on Sand Bank No. 8. The captain had a private name for the place, "Turtle Cay," but the islet was less remarkable for turtles than for birds. The great majority were sooty terns, which covered the interior in a dense, sooty colony, but there were also crested terns, brown boobies, and a few silver gulls. As we circumambulated, I called out the names. The captain, for his part, had a fine trained eye for liquor bottles and could identify them at great distances. "Lesser crested tern," I would observe. "Gordon's gin," the captain would sing out in counterpoint. Then "Johnnie Walker" and "Bundaberg!"

Like seabird colonies everywhere, those of No. 8 were given to sudden, inexplicable alarms. For no good reason the din would rise sharply and there would be a general lifting-off. These panics of the birds begin, I believe, in the consternation of a single Chicken Little. That bird affects his neighbor and starts a chain reaction. Only once did we ourselves give the birds any cause for concern. One of the captain's empty bottles lay close to the colony's edge. As he strode toward it to verify the label, the din crescendoed and the entire population of No. 8 lifted off. The whole sooty top of the island seemed to have atomized and risen heavenward—a sky more of wings than of air. The captain, intent on some old brandy bottle, was oblivious. His identification had been correct. Grinning back at me in triumph,

he held the bottle high against the blizzard of birds.

After the two weeks we'd spent cruising reefs lying just below sea level and sand cays just above it, the ridges of Lizard Island seemed Himalayan. Lizard is a "continental" island—one landward of the barrier reef proper—1,200 feet high. There is a small resort on the island, and a scientific station. The island is named for the three-foot monitor lizards ("sand goannas," the Australians call them) that Captain Cook discovered here. Cook stopped at Lizard in 1770. He had just patched *Endeavor* after her disastrous encounter with Endeavor Reef. He climbed to the island's summit to search out a passage through the rampart of reefs that imprisoned him. The walk to "Cook's Look" is still a fine one, and the panorama of reefs from the summit is stunning.

There is good fishing off Lizard Island, and good diving and snorkeling on the island's fringing reefs. The barrier reef lies very close as well. One of the more interesting dives on that outer reef is a place called the Cod Hole. This "hole" is a recess where for fifteen years or so people have been feeding huge potato cod. On entering the water, a diver is surrounded by huge, homely, expectant fish. Potato cod have the faces of hanging judges, with enormous, dour, downturned mouths. They are tame enough to ride, if you can grab hold of a fin. They are polite until you bring out the food, at which point the great wraparound mouths crowd close to inhale offerings of Spanish mackerel from your hand.

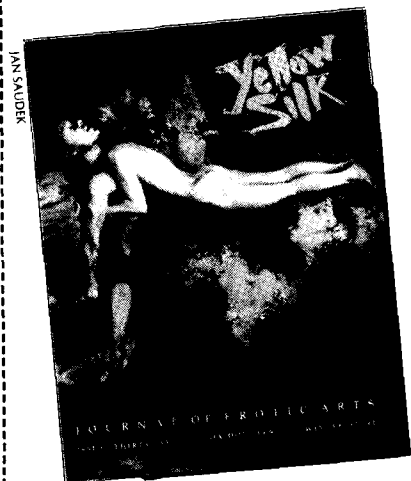
Three moray eels live at the Cod Hole. The captain had names for them: Morris, Molly, and Morris Minor. The smallest, Morris Minor, was still unsure of himself and a little snappy, the captain said, but the two big eels were tame and could be petted. When Molly showed her horrific face in a jumble of coral rock below us, I swam down to her. Molly's baleful jaws worked ceaselessly, half closing as she passed water over her gills. Her cold, unblinking eye stared out at nothing in particular. I extended a finger toward her, ready to snatch it back. Molly had that baggy look of morays—an old-womanly tonelessness of muscle—and I doubted she would feel good to touch. I was wrong. The skin of her cheek was silky.

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"I leaned over to kiss my mother. I could smell her faint perfume as I bent over, but instead of reaching her cheek up toward mine she turned it away from me and held up her hand." A short story.

AT CAIRNS WE left the dive boat. We rested for a couple of days under the green, rain-forested mountains of that town. I slowed my pace, imitating the Aborigines. The Aboriginal strategy, as near as I can figure it, is to hang loose and wait a millennium or two until the white people fade away. By day, from park benches along Cairns's fine esplanade, the Aborigines and I watched the ibises, pelicans, spoonbills, mudskippers, and fiddler crabs that congregate along the shore. In the evening we watched the sky darken with the multitudes of fruit bats that fly out of the mangroves at dusk.

Then it was off to the reef again. From Port Douglas, in the Cairns Section of the marine park, we made several trips to Agincourt Reefs on the fast catamarans of Quicksilver Cruises. No outfit better illustrates Queensland's boom in reef tourism. "We had no idea about loading people," Jim Wallace, the founder, confessed to me in describing Quicksilver's early days. "We were surveyed for eighty-nine people, and the first day one hundred and thirty-nine showed up. We couldn't tell them to piss off. We got them all on"—he rolled his eyes—"and we got away with it."

Today Quicksilver is a remarkably smooth operation. On the trip out to the reef, the divemaster gives lessons in snorkeling. The naturalists give a slide lecture on reef biology. Any difficult passenger is indicated with eyebrow language and passed around among all the members of the crew. Everyone works him over. ("That face mask doesn't seem to fit quite perfectly, sir," and so on.) The staff makes a game of breaking him, as one would break a wild horse. The passengers arrive at Agincourt Reefs mollified and educated.

The catamaran ties up to a floating platform moored to the reef. If there are divers, a boatload of them heads off to a dive site. Accomplished snorkelers head off in another boat. Beginning snorkelers descend the gangway to the platform, rummage through bins for masks and snorkels and fins, and go over the side like lemmings.

The variety of shapes and swimming styles in beginning snorkelers is wonderful. The water churned with them. The snorkelers were as exotic and colorful, I thought, as any spawning

aggregation of damselfish. From below I watched the eyes of one nine-year-old boy, not five seconds in the water, grow wide behind his face mask. "Mmmmmmm! Mmmmmmmh! Mmm meeeeeemmmmm! Mmmmmmm!" he vocalized through his snorkel. Pointing downward with one hand, he groped blindly behind him for his sister with the other. Whole excited sentences came piping unintelligibly through his snorkel. He had just seen the polychromatic creation of the reef for the first time.

Quicksilver passengers who don't wish to get wet can watch the fish through glass windows in the pontoons of the platform, or take short Nemoesque voyages in a "Subsee Explorer," from which they look down at passing corals through steeply angled picture windows in the hull.

Another catamaran in the Quicksilver fleet makes the short trip to Low Isles, east of Agincourt Reefs. Low Isles are the most minimal of archipelagos: just two islands. One is a sand cay with a lighthouse, the other a mangrove island. They have a nice polarity: the one small, inhabited, and dominated by its revolving light; the other much larger, an uninhabited wilderness dark with mangroves.

In 1928 Charles Maurice Yonge led the first major biological expedition to the Great Barrier Reef. He and his team of scientists spent almost thirteen months camped on the sand cay under the lighthouse. In his *A Year on the Great Barrier Reef*, Sir Maurice wrote of "the little sand cay on which we lived and which we grew to know so intimately—every tree and every bush; almost, I would say, every grain of sand." The cay, according to Yonge's measurements, is 185 yards long and 110 yards wide, taking up an area of three and a half acres. After an hour or so on it and two circumambulations, I felt I knew the place almost as well as Sir Maurice had. I rented a ski-board from Bev Grant, the wife of the lighthouse keeper, and paddled it to the mangrove island.

The water was very clear on the incoming tide and seldom more than eight inches deep over the algal flat separating the two islands. Sea cucumbers lay here and there on the sand, and small clams of the genus *Tridacna*. Twice I flushed a ray: a puff of brownish sand and the disk of the ray shooting away. A dozen reef herons, some in the white phase, some in the dark,

were working knee-deep along a line of seedling mangroves in advance of the main forest. The two color phases of *Egretta sacra*, the reef heron, are said to interbreed without prejudice *and with no intermediate forms*—a little problem in genetics I have never been able to figure out. As I paddled near, several white herons spread dazzling wings and lifted off. Several dark herons followed like their shadows.

Entering a mangrove inlet at the north end of the island, I ceased paddling at the mouth and let my craft glide in. The shade of the mangroves closed very cool over me. Dappled sunlight played among the trunks and on the arches of aerial roots. Reflected rays danced on the bottoms of the leaves. The forest cut off the rumble of surf, and the trees resonated instead to the fine, deep *whoooo* of Torres Strait pigeons. Now and then I flushed a pigeon. It flew away, snow white over the dark-green canopy. The contrast with the foliage could not have been stronger, yet I never saw a roosting bird. Somehow they hide. One man-

grove was thick with them, but the first I knew of it was a white rush of black-tipped wings, and a swaying of branches suddenly unburdened.

A NOLD WRECK, the little ship *Pro-tector*, marks the channel into the Heron Island pier. She's no protection anymore, just a shell of exposed iron ribs and rusted plates. A few brown boobies and pied cormorants roost by day on what remains of the tilted deck. In the shadowy bowels of the hold, reef herons stand white and ghostly, like passengers on the barge across the river Styx.

Heron Island is not the least bit stygian. It is the opposite sort of place. Heron lies in the middle of the Capricornia Section, the southernmost division of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. It was the southernmost and last landfall of my trip. If coral cays, in their evolution from sand spits, ever achieve a climax vegetation, then Heron has done so—the island's interior is a forest of fine gnarled old *Pisonia grandis*. The island summarizes the marine

park nicely. It is simultaneously a wild-life sanctuary, resort, research station, seabird colony, and turtle nesting grounds, all circumscribed by surf breaking white on reefs.

Tens of thousands of noddy terns nest on the island. They police the sandy paths, spearing any fallen *Pisonia* leaves, carrying them aloft again for nest-building, squabbling over them in midair. Reef herons, buff-banded rails, and silver gulls slip into the resort's restaurant and slink along the floor from table to table, looking for scraps. Wedge-tailed shearwaters, "moaning birds," begin their eerie caterwauling at dusk. Many have their burrows beneath the resort cottages, and their lament proceeds from beneath the sand. On a visitor's first night those cries are infernal, hideous—the moans of subhuman children being tortured, or of deranged cats. By the second night the moans have somehow become lovely.

There is fine diving on the reefs surrounding Heron, and dive a number of them I did. After five weeks under wa-

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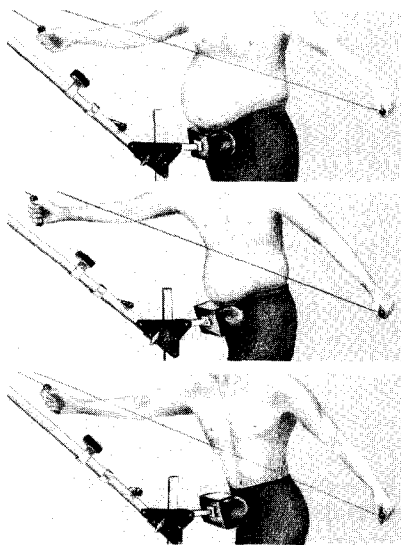
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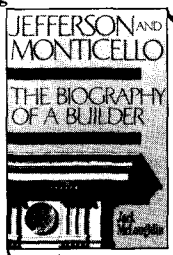
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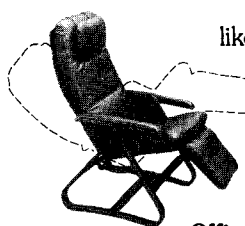
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ter, though, I found myself drawn to land. There was the cool of the *Pisonia* forest. There was the research-station library. There were reef walks with the station's biologists. There were the sunbathers: in bikinis beside the pool, topless toward the eastern end of the lagoon beach. There were tennis, lectures, and the pub.

At four one moonlit morning I walked the beach looking for turtles. Sea turtles come ashore to lay after dusk, and night is the time to see them. The surf murmured on the reef. Now and again the moon shadow of a tern came ghosting over the sand. Three hundred yards past the last resort cottage I began finding the fresh trails of those reptilian tractors. I heard a heaving sound inland as the females dug, and occasionally the snap of a branch. The night smelled of wet, excavated sand. Here and there moonlight glinted from the dome of a shell.

Two flashlights were working the night ahead of me. They belonged to two women from the research station, who carried clipboards on which they logged in turtles and recorded any tags. One of the researchers showed me, with the beam of her torch, a turtle that had finished the pit of its nest and had begun sinking the well of the egg chamber at the bottom. "It happens fairly often," the woman said. For a moment I was puzzled; then I saw that the turtle was incomplete. She was digging with just one back flipper. The other had been lost to a shark.

Sea turtles are dull creatures of instinct, we're told, yet this one had figured out how to compensate. She was using her tail to help in the digging. While we watched, the ovipositor began its work. The chamber filled. From those maimed, imperfect hindparts the eggs emerged—round, white, glistening, perfect.

The next afternoon, at Shark Bay, on the eastern tip of the island, I rescued a hatchling turtle from a silver gull. The dash from nest to sea is the crucial moment in any turtle's life, and this turtle's moment had been interrupted high on the beach by the gull. The hatchling was on its back, struggling with a foreflipper to right itself, when I chased the gull away. I picked the turtle up and turned it over in my hand. The gull's beak had done no damage that I could detect. I admired the long, trim oars of the foreflippers,

the large eye, the perfect little beak, the imbricate pattern of the shell. I admired the creamy white underside of the shell and flippers. Turtles, like most pelagic creatures, are "countershaded," colored dark above and pale below. Viewed from above, this hatchling would disappear against the blue of the ocean. Viewed from below, it would vanish against the brightness of the sky.

I stooped and sent the turtle on its way again. It skittered down the sand with alternate strokes of its foreflippers. A wave broke and slid fast up the beach slope, and the turtle met the sea for the first time. If the hatchling was male, it would never come ashore again. If it was female, it would not return for fifty years. I lost it for a moment in the surf, and then saw it swimming in the smooth sheet of water beyond. For several strokes it propelled itself as it had on land, pulling alternately on the oars of its foreflippers. Then instinct informed it or the ocean whispered that a double stroke is better. Pulling simultaneously on both oars, it headed straight out into the blue of the Coral Sea.

THE PRINCIPAL ports of entry for the Great Barrier Reef are Cairns in the north and Townsville in the south. Both cities are served by direct flights from North America. The best time to visit, especially in the warmer, northern end of the reef, is probably in the cooler months—April through December. Dress is informal in the resorts, and the less of it the better, in Queensland's tropical climate. Do bring plenty of sunscreen. (Two in three Australians get skin cancer by age seventy.)

In the foregoing account the various landfalls serve as a kind of shorthand for the great reef. Lizard Island is typical of the continental islands, of which there are a multitude: the Whitsunday Group, Great Keppel, the Cumberland Islands, Dunk, Fitzroy, and many others. Raine Island and Sand Bank No. 8 represent all the constellations of sand cays. Heron Island stands for all the dozens of wooded cays.

The reef is a universe. Reef tourism is booming, but the reef is vast and the impacts so far seem to be minimal. There are still great stretches of reef where you will see no other people. When you have tired of that, there are places to join humanity again. □



“Zorn” for “Anger”

The composer John Zorn likes being the bad boy of new music

by Francis Davis

JOHN ZORN, WHOM John Rockwell, of *The New York Times*, has called “the single most interesting, important and influential composer to arise from the Manhattan ‘downtown’ avant garde since Steve Reich and Philip Glass,” is the only musician I’ve ever considered suing. I’m not entirely joking. In 1989, when Zorn (whose name in German means “anger”), wearing a T-shirt that read DIE YUPPIE SCUM!, was playing Ornette Coleman tunes on alto saxophone with his band Spy vs. Spy at the Painted Bride Art Center, in Philadelphia, he put me and everyone else in the small auditorium at risk of permanent hearing loss by recklessly turning the volume up as high as it would go.

I’m not ordinarily squeamish about loud music, but Spy vs. Spy’s opening downbeat was so brutal that I thought I felt my eardrums break. Thirty seconds into the first tune my head was spinning as though I had been drunk and awake for days on end, and my stomach began to churn in response to the music’s velocity, which I decided was almost as senseless as the volume. Zorn and Spy vs. Spy—the alto saxophonist Tim Berne, the bassist Mark Dresser, and the drummers Joey Baron and Michael Vatcher—were grinding Coleman’s music down into a feelingless, monochromatic din. They treated his compositions, which are benchmarks of free jazz, as though they were speed metal (bohemianized heavy

metal, without the oversize stage accouterments) or hard core (the most dystopian contemporary mutation of what used to be called punk). Although intended as homage, the concert amounted to heresy, presenting Ornette Coleman without the swing, sensuality, and blues-based *joie de vivre* that make even his own forays into rock and funk recognizable as jazz and identifiable as his.

All around me people were fleeing with hands over their ears, while a handful of mostly younger audience members, there for the duration, sneered at them. I should have fled too, but a combination of shell shock and journalistic instinct kept me glued to my seat. (Someone, maybe an infuriated Ornette Coleman fan, overturned a sales table of Zorn albums and compact discs on his way out.) Who would have thought that a quintet without a single electric instrument could inflict such pain? As though to add insult to injury, the band members chatted among themselves between salvos but didn’t address the audience until about twenty minutes and nine or ten numbers had passed. When Baron glanced up from his drums, rather dazed-looking himself, I thought, and asked, “How ya doin’ out there?” I didn’t hear anybody answer him.

This nightmare was still on my mind when I spoke with Zorn in New York last spring. “A lot of people were outraged when they first heard Ornette play his music in the fifties and sixties,” he said, in defense of his similar junking of Coleman on his 1989 album *Spy vs. Spy* (Elektra Musician 9 60844). “The speed and the power and the volume, those are elements that admittedly were not part of Ornette’s original conception. But those are essential elements in bringing it up to date, in giving it the same impact it had then. Volume is an important parameter. It’s visceral. Physical.”

Granted, with practically anything now permissible in music, the threat of physical damage posed by unreasonable volume might be the last remaining shock. But shouldn’t a musician be wary of long-term effects on his own hearing? “Forget about it,” said Zorn, a mild-looking thirty-seven-year-old native New Yorker with a long, narrow face, stylish eyeglasses, and, when I saw him, the beginnings of a ponytail.

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"My ears are blown already. I've been playing loud music for a long time." But he admitted that some of his sidemen wear earplugs. "That's the loudest situation they've ever been in," he said, referring to Naked City, another of his bands, which, in addition to jazz tunes and movie themes, plays old surfing hits and Zorn's own hard-core originals—a repertoire for which, I told him, top volume does seem appropriate. When I heard Naked City perform live, they were less painfully noisy than Spy vs. Spy.

That observation brought a hoot. "We probably weren't loud enough, then," Zorn said.

BY ZORN'S CURRENT standards, probably not. One of those New Yorkers who gives the impression of being as proud of his city's sleaze as Iowans are of their corn, Zorn delights in his self-created role as the bad boy of Manhattan's eclectic fringe music scene. By now it's part of the identity he brings onstage with him.

In 1989, when the Brooklyn Philharmonic performed his "For Your Eyes Only" as part of New Music America, an annual showcase for avant-garde music which is staged in a different city each year, he used the space allotted him in the festival brochure for a biography to attack NMA for annually sponsoring the big names who "look good on grant applications or concert posters." (Most reviewers lambasted Zorn for taking the money if he felt that way, but his piece had been commissioned by the Brooklyn Philharmonic, which considered the piece its own to perform whenever it wished.)

Zorn once wrote a piece for the Kronos Quartet which called on the members of that resolutely with-it but essentially straitlaced string ensemble to bark and growl like dogs. That's an example of his humor at its most light-hearted, but it can be heavy-handed, too. He once faxed a message to an Austrian concert promoter requesting that his trio be billed as ZOG—an acronym for "Zionist-occupied government," which is a rallying cry for The Order, the Aryan supremacist group that murdered the Denver talk-show host Alan Berg in 1984. The trio, which Zorn describes as "the world's first all-Jewish heavy-metal band" and whose other members are the guitarist Elliott Sharp, a veteran free improvis-

er, and the drummer Ted Epstein, from Blind Idiot God, Zorn's favorite speed-metal group, ultimately decided on the name Slan, after a monster in a 1950s science-fiction novel.

Zorn, in short, is exactly the sort of rude, overgrown adolescent you would go out of your way to avoid, if only he weren't so... well, interesting, important, and influential (at least potentially). A decade ago he seemed just a minor figure in the New York avant-garde—not innovative, just eccentric. At that time his work consisted mostly of "games" pieces, which were prankish, discontinuous, Zorn-"cued" group improvisations with titles like "Archery," "Rugby," and "Soccer." These sounded like frat-house Stockhausen and qualified as Zorn compositions only in the sense that a party can be said to belong to the person who throws it.

Then Zorn sprang a delightful surprise with *The Big Gundown* (Nonesuch 9 79139), a 1986 album on which he played the film music of Ennio Morricone, an Italian composer best known in this country for his soundtrack tracks to Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns. But Morricone has a much greater range than that, as Zorn showed. The album would have been notable if only for rounding up a who's who of lower-Manhattan music, including the keyboard player Wayne Horvitz and the guitarists Bill Frisell and Fred Frith, all of whom subsequently joined Naked City. With its kinesthetic mix of musical styles and its equivalent of jump cuts, wipes, fades, and dissolves, it played like a witty essay on the relationship between music and film—the perfect salute to its subject. In an obvious parallel with contemporary painting, the album established Zorn as a composer by acquisition, capable of altering a work's meaning by shifting its context. He gave new significance to the word "cover," traditional record-business parlance for slavish emulation of another artist in an attempt to tap a new audience (in the 1950s, for instance, Pat Boone and other white artists "covered" Fats Domino and Little Richard). In Zorn's terms, reinterpretation in another style is the ultimate act of homage.

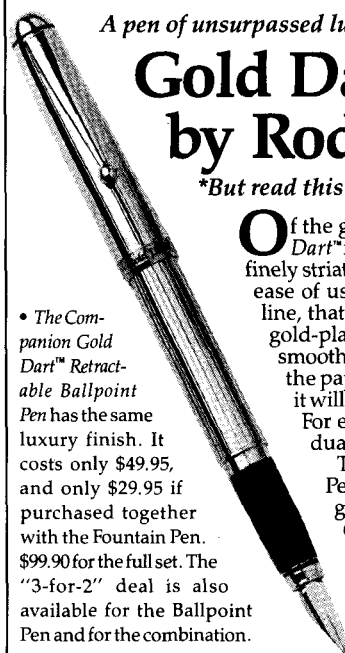
A year later he followed up with *Spillane* (Nonesuch 9 79172), an album whose lengthy title track so successfully evoked the testosterone-and-bile

ethos of its pulp-novelist namesake that, as Zorn complained to me, it was accepted as another of his covers rather than as an original work. With these back-to-back releases, Zorn helped to clarify a previously murky new aesthetic: "avant-garde" as an *attitude* toward music, and an eclectic, self-contained genre, rather than simply a vanguard movement in classical, jazz, or pop music.

ZORN CALLED attention to an audience whose values were identical to his as a performer, and that had just been waiting for someone like him to come along—something usually true of only the biggest pop stars, and almost never true of avant-gardists. "In general, my generation and younger, this is how we grew up," Zorn, who was born in Manhattan and raised in Queens, told me. "We had an unprecedented variety of music available to us, because of the availability of everything on LP."

Zorn's mother, a professor of education, liked classical music and world ethnic recordings; his father, a hairdresser, listened to jazz, country, and French chansons. "And through my brother, who's seven years older and wanted to be a greaser in the fifties, I was exposed to doo wop and the Silhouettes, groups like that." Around the age of fourteen, Zorn says, he immersed himself in Stravinsky, Webern, Ives, Varèse, and such contemporary experimental composers as Stockhausen and Mauricio Kagel. "But all through that period I was listening to the Doors and playing bass in a surf band." As a high school student commuting daily from Queens to Manhattan, he also spent a lot of time in Manhattan's repertory movie houses, sometimes watching movies for so long that he had to sleep at a schoolmate's apartment in Manhattan.

He found himself spellbound by film music—"the many styles a film composer has to know in order to complement the images," he says. "In that sense I think the great film composers are the precursors of what my generation is doing today." His pantheon includes Morricone, Bernard Herrmann, John Barry, Dmitri Tiomkin, Jerry Goldsmith, and Henry Mancini. Zorn's biggest formative influence of all, though, was Carl Stalling, whose music for Warner Bros. cartoons he wor-



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"MAGIC ACT"

Answers to opening clues were Gifts of the Magi: GOL-D (log rev.), FRANK-INCENSE, and MYRRH (homophonic half of *murmur*). Across. 6. AC(CURS)T 11. OR-LEANS 12. N-ERO (rev.) 14. T-RENT 15. HE-REIN 17. E(NAME)L 18. LIED (double def.) 19. P(LAST)IC 29. US(HER)ED 30. BUM-P 32. I-CI(r)CLE 34. RO(O)T 35. NA(BO)BS 37. EMIR (hidden) 38. T-ROUSER 39. DI-D-D-LED 40. (s)TRESS Down. 2. ERROL (rev.) 3. ALEWIFE (double def.) 4. RENNET (rev.) 5. DATE-D 6. (C)ANON 7. CRE(M)ATE 8. U-N(R)EST 9. R-EEL 10. TON-IC'S 13. RI(SIN)G 21. I(N-SEA)M 22. S(CRIB-A)-L 23. VA(MOO)SE 26. TE(C)S (set rev.) 28. INTERS (anag.) 30. BE(SO)T 31. POKES (double def.) 32. I-BID 33. LA(R)D

shipped, he realized later, for its discontinuity and use of Stockhausen-like "sound blocks."

Stalling is suddenly in vogue. Last fall, in New York, *Bugs on Broadway* featured Bugs Bunny cartoons accompanied by a live orchestra playing Stalling's original music. The best of his sound tracks for Bugs, Daffy Duck, Road Runner, and others in the animated menagerie have now been collected on *The Carl Stalling Project: Music From Warner Bros. Cartoons 1936-1958* (Warner Bros. 9-26027). Zorn, in the liner notes, praises Stalling for "following the visual logic of screen action rather than the traditional rules of musical form," thus creating "a radical compositional arc unprecedented in the history of music."

After high school Zorn briefly attended Webster College, in St. Louis, "a very small hippie liberal-arts school that let you study whatever you wanted to and was the only college that would accept me." It was there that he "got turned on to the jazz scene seriously," through live exposure to Julius Hemphill, Oliver Lake, Hamiet Bluiett, and other then-local musicians who had bonded into a collective called BAG, for Black Artists Group. "I knew I didn't have a place in that, but I didn't really want a place. Jazz was just another kind of music I studied and learned from."

When trying his hand at straight jazz, Zorn can be controversial without any effort. On *News for Lulu* (Hat Art 6005), a 1987 trio session with Frisell on guitar and the trombonist George Lewis, Zorn plays compositions by Sonny Clark, Kenny Dorham, Hank Mobley, and Freddie Redd—unsung jazzmen associated with Blue Note Records in the late fifties and early sixties, a period and a sound now being driven into the dust by solemn young neoclassical hard-boppers. Zorn's approach is the antithesis of theirs. To begin with, his instrumentation is unorthodox (no rhythm section), and his choice of tunes is noncanonic. And instead of merely zipping through the chord changes of the tunes, he pays careful attention to their melodies and rhythms, finding in them improvisational possibilities that even their composers overlooked.

Not everyone appreciates Zorn's fresh slant on hard bop. Some reviewers dismiss it as his desperate attempt

to mask his lack of conventional musicianship. Such criticism irks Zorn, although he swears it doesn't. "Some people say I can't play the changes, some people say I can't play in tune, and some people say I can't play the saxophone," he told me. "My basic response is I'm doing the best I can. You can spend your whole life, like Frisell has, learning to get inside the chords. I don't do it that way."

ZORN'S WAY STILL includes free improvisation. Last May he gave a three-night retrospective of his games pieces—each involving a different group of improvisers—at the Knitting Factory, in lower Manhattan, a few blocks from his apartment. I was in the audience the first night, sitting behind two musicians awaiting their turn to go onstage. "Which piece is this?" one asked the other during Zorn's "Rugby." "I don't know. Don't they all sound alike?" the second musician replied. I had the feeling that they'd had this conversation many times before.

A truism about free improvisation is that it's fun to play but murder to sit through. Another truism is that you have to be there: it doesn't work on disc. At the Knitting Factory the rowdy fraternity of Zorn's music won me over, especially the trio piece "Rugby," performed by the cellist Tom Cora and the violinist Polly Bradford, with Zorn on saxophone and duck calls. (Apparently more considerate of audiences on his home turf than of those on the road, he warned that "Rugby" would be "excruciatingly loud," though it really wasn't.) But I hesitate to recommend even *Cobra* (Hat Art 2-6040), arguably Zorn's most successful record in this genre, which I listened to immediately upon receiving it in 1987 and have had no interest in playing since.

Along with *The Big Gundown* and *Spillane*, the best introduction to Zorn's work is *Naked City* (Elektra/Nonesuch 9 79238), on which he takes genre-bending to delicious new extremes. Zorn being Zorn, *Naked City* tries your patience with a cluster of eight ear-numbing rants by the band and the screaming singer Yamatsuka Eye, none lasting more than thirty-eight seconds. My advice is to skip selections ten through seventeen when programming the CD, because the other eighteen tracks justify the effort. Zorn atones for

Spy vs. Spy with a crafty reinterpretation of Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman," loaded with verbatim Coleman quotes over a this-means-business bass line appropriated from John Barry's "The James Bond Theme" (which is itself transformed into a Jimi Hendrix-style rave-up a few tracks later). It shouldn't work, but it does. The most satisfying of the disc's several movie themes are Georges Delerue's "Contempt" (done as an art-rock symphony, à la Glenn Branca) and Morricone's "The Sicilian Clan," on which Zorn's improvisation takes the form of an edgy but wonderfully apposite countermelody.

Of the Zorn originals, the one that stays with you the longest is "Saigon Pickup." It's just under five minutes long, and it comes at you in sections (as Fred Astaire said of a femme fatale in the Mickey Spillane parody in the movie *The Bandwagon*): a minimalistic, almost Philip Glass-like piano theme; then Zorn squalling over an Asian-sounding scale; then a country-and-western pastiche; then back to the piano theme, this time reinforced by string synthesizer; then more squalling, followed by more C&W; then some lounge jazz; then some psychedelic organ and reggae drumming; then a gleeful, Ornette Coleman-like melody; then more country, more squalling, more minimalism, and the final fade. Yet it isn't a hopeless audio collage. You never feel as though you're being given a smug demonstration of what's currently hot in music, as you sometimes do with Zorn (on this album's "Graveyard Shift," for example).

Zorn's breadth is such that he tends to fragment the intrepid audience he already has, which would seem to put mass-cult adulation out of the question. But on tracks like *Naked City*'s "Latin Quarter," "Reanimator," and "Batman" (a Zorn original, not Prince's movie or Neal Hefti's TV-show theme) the group rocks out so hard that some of his fans have begun to think of it as Zorn's "boogie" band—his ticket to commercial success. Guess again. *Naked City*'s second release, due later this year, will consist of what Zorn calls "classical covers" of works by Debussy, Ives, and Scriabin, among others. It's all part of Zorn's determination to take listeners by surprise. Let's hope this one doesn't hurt. □

Books

A False Panacea

by Nicholas Lemann

POLITICS, MARKETS,
AND AMERICA'S SCHOOLS
by John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe.
The Brookings Institution,
\$28.95/\$10.95.

THE LEVEL OF liberal intellectual certainty in this country peaked in late 1964 or early 1965. It was still possible at that moment to believe that Keynesian economic-management techniques had permanently solved the problems of recession and unemployment; that the 1964 Civil Rights Act was going to eliminate America's racial troubles; that anti-communist, interventionist internationalism was the one true path in foreign affairs; and that the federal government was a powerful, fine-tuned instrument for the achievement of liberal goals. In recent memory the government had ended the Depression, beaten Hitler, regulated away the most fraudulent and unsafe excesses of capitalism, built highways across the country, and sent men into space, among other achievements. At the level of everyday life there were all sorts of routine things that our governments did well—deliver the mail, maintain public safety, and, most important, operate a system of universal public education that was still the envy of the world.

Then all in a rush came the escalation of the Vietnam War, the Watts riot, and several other profoundly certainty-eroding events. One of them was the release, in July of 1966, of the Coleman Report, a large study, mandated by the Civil Rights Act and funded by the federal government, of the differences between public schools for blacks and for whites. The idea was that the report would show the nation's schools to be separate and unequal, with black schools operating on far more limited resources and therefore

producing lower student achievement. This would provide justification for another landmark piece of legislation, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which had institutionalized the long-deferred liberal dream of federal aid to local public schools. The act was written so as to guarantee heavy subsidies for big-city ghetto schools; the money, presumably, would quickly bring black student achievement up to the national average.

Instead, James S. Coleman, the sociologist who ran the study, found that the differences in per-pupil spending between black and white schools were not as great as most people thought, and that, anyway, the most important determinants of student achievement have to do with family and peer group—whereas spending makes almost no difference at all. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, which was just beginning to dispense its new monies to school systems, found the Coleman Report profoundly embarrassing, and arranged for the press conference announcing its findings to be held on the Friday afternoon before the July 4 weekend, with the Secretary of HEW absent, in the hope that few reporters would bother to come.

In the short run, the Coleman Report was used as justification for federal busing orders, which were supposed

to help black students by changing their educational peer groups. In the long run, it was crucial in helping to introduce into public discourse the idea that public schools don't work. All through the post-Second World War period alarms about urban public education had been sounded, but the Coleman Report had the force of social science and a government imprimatur. Also, it carried the implication that "throwing money at problems" never helps, which is one of the essential handful of notions that have shaped our domestic politics since the Great Society.

In recent years Coleman has been arguing that private and parochial schools do a better job of educating poor children than public schools, because they have a richer supply of "social capital." In his most recent full-length book, *Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities* (1987), he and his co-author, Thomas Hoffer, suggested "with some hesitation" that public school students be offered a wider choice of schools to attend on the government's dime. Now come John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, with no hesitation at all, proposing that public education is so fundamentally flawed a concept that the system we've had for all these years must be replaced by one in which the government funds students, not



schools. As they accurately note, "Just a few years ago, the suggestion that choice might succeed in restructuring American education would have been regarded as pure fantasy. Times have changed."

Chubb and Moe are intellectual descendants of Coleman (and also of the political scientist Charles E. Lindblom, to whose major work, *Politics and Markets*, their title pays tribute), but their work, much more than their predecessors', bears the stamp of the 1980s. Bits of Reagan-era jargon, such as "supply side" and "decontrol," are scattered through their book. More broadly, although they address only the issue of education, their line of argument assumes that the whole American central government is essentially a spent force—that, as President Reagan said in his first inaugural address, "government is the problem." In the nation's intellectual history *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* might one day prove useful in demarcating the moment when the prevailing assumptions about government became precisely the opposite of what they had been a quarter century earlier.

Conservative think tanks like the Heritage Foundation have been promoting educational choice for years; what gives Chubb and Moe's work its impact is that its publisher is The Brookings Institution, the leading supplier of ideas and personnel to Democratic Presidents. The heavy publicity (for this kind of book) that attended the release of *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* was reminiscent of the reception given the Coleman Report: what made it news was the association with a liberal institution, the dramatic dismissal of the current wave of education reform as being doomed to failure, and the sense that the conclusion reached was a matter not of the authors' ideological preference but of the inexorable findings of a vast research project. The criticism of the book by mainstream educators has had a sputtering, how-dare-they quality; now Chubb, the front man of the pair, is widely quoted on television and in newspapers as a leading education expert.

AS IS OFTEN the case when a book takes on a life of its own in political debate, what's actually in *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* is somewhat out of sync with its reputa-

tion. The first third of the book is a philosophical tract explaining with airtight libertarian logic why public schools can't possibly succeed and private schools can't possibly fail. The problem inherent in public schools, according to Chubb and Moe, is not that their standards aren't high enough but that they operate under "direct democratic control" (a catch phrase the authors use often, and always disapprovingly). Inevitably, direct democratic control generates bureaucracy, and bureaucracy eats away at the autonomy of individual schools by imposing on them "higher-order values"—requirements of one kind or another. (The educational reforms of the 1980s won't work, Chubb and Moe say, because they merely introduce more rules—for example, teacher-competency standards.) Since autonomy is the one essential precondition of a good school, direct democratic control and quality education simply can't coexist. Private schools, on the other hand, are controlled by the market, in the sense that each one has to attract a voluntary student body; not coincidentally, they are autonomous, and good.

In the next section of the book Chubb and Moe undertake to provide statistical proof that their theory is correct. Here they enter the realm of quantitative social science, with its heavy emphasis on regression analysis and its impenetrable prose style. Most lay readers will be likely to skip a few chapters ahead.

A concomitant temptation is to accept on its face Chubb and Moe's assertion that, as they wrote recently in *The New York Times*, "a nationwide study we recently conducted of more than 400 schools and some 20,000 students, teachers, and principals suggests that poor performance is not really a school problem. It is a system problem." The temptation should be avoided; the evidence isn't overwhelming.

Chubb and Moe's nationwide study consisted not of visits to schools but of running the computer tapes from a "data set" called High School and Beyond, which also provided the evidence for James Coleman's most recent book. The High School and Beyond data come from the results of an hour-long standardized test administered twice (in 1980 and in 1982) to a large group of high school students, and from the answers to a questionnaire

that was distributed to principals and teachers in 1984. When Chubb and Moe are discussing the recent vogue for requiring more student-achievement testing (which to them is yet another restriction on school autonomy), they dismiss standardized-test results as unhelpful to policy-makers.

Statewide testing of students can . . . be a misleading and counterproductive means of evaluating the performance of schools. . . . The reality is that people look at a school's average test scores and jump to conclusions—unwarranted conclusions—about school performance, with far-reaching consequences for their assessments of problems and solutions.

Nonetheless, they have relied completely on test scores for evidence to support their own sweeping conclusions. Also, the impression that emerges from reading through their repeated reformulations of the data is that it was actually something of a struggle to arrive at the inescapable conclusion that public education is fatally flawed. They point out, "The organizational similarities across America's schools are quite impressive."

Like most educational researchers from Coleman onward, Chubb and Moe have had to adjust their reform ideas to the fundamental empirical truth that the differences among schools are much less dramatic than the differences among students. Their regression analyses consistently show that how well students do in school is determined to a great extent by factors having nothing to do with school—achievement correlates highly with family income, education, values, and socioeconomic status, and with the student's ability. When public schools are located in high-income, high-status areas—in shorthand, the suburbs—the structural problems inherent in direct democratic control seem magically to melt away. The one school policy that correlates most highly with student achievement, academic tracking, is a tool available only to principals who have a substantial number of highly motivated, well-prepared students. To put it another way, only inside the city limits, and only in public schools whose students come from poor families that don't stress education and don't impose much discipline, can public education fairly be character-

ized as not working. Private schools almost never draw upon a poor urban constituency, so it is hard to demonstrate that they work simply by virtue of being free from direct democratic control. Bad public schools and difficult-to-teach students appear to have a relationship quite like that between the chicken and the egg.

The explanation that Chubb and Moe give for the success of suburban public schools is that "schools with homogenous, problem-free environments" can work under direct democratic control, because only when educational circumstances are difficult do bureaucracies feel the need to entrench for protective purposes, and to impose bothersome rules. Presumably the homogenous-environment theory would also explain the success of schools that have no autonomy at all, like the ones in the pre-Vatican II American Catholic system, or in present-day Japan, where the Ministry of Education controls and coordinates all the weekly lesson plans. If Chubb and Moe's basic theory applies only under certain circumstances, that waters it down quite a bit; however, the authors argue that since an affluent student body isn't an option for most inner-city schools, switching from democratic to market control is the only means available by which to engender real improvement.

Many of Chubb and Moe's findings about what makes schools good sound right. They say that effective schools tend to stress academics and to set high standards; to have strong principals who aren't looking for promotions to headquarters jobs at the Board of Education, and teachers who are not just credentialed, tenured time-servers; and (interestingly, in light of the findings of the Coleman Report) to have above-average financial resources. All this would seem to fit right into a body of valuable recent writing about how to make bureaucracies more effective—for example, the work of the defense-reform movement, and of corporate-management gurus like Thomas Peters and William Ouchi, who consistently find in the market system most of the organizational problems that Chubb and Moe lay at the feet of direct democratic control. The assumption of all these writers is that big bureaucracies are an essential part of modern society, so we have to figure out how to make

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Hussein and Arafat – Birds of a Feather

How they engineered the bloody events in Jerusalem

On Monday, October 8, 1990, on the Jewish festival of Succoth, about 20,000 Jews assembled for prayer at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, the holiest place in the Jewish religion. Two mosques are also located on Temple Mount, high above the Wall. Because of the indulgence and respect for other religions, the Israeli authorities allow them to operate freely and fully under the jurisdiction of Moslem religious authorities. Suddenly and without any provocation, whipped into a frenzy by their clerics, a raging mob of 4,000 Moslem Arabs stormed out of the mosques and loosed a barrage of rocks, bricks, and Molotov cocktails on the worshipping crowd below them. Twenty-eight people were severely injured. By miracle, nobody was killed. The mob then attacked the Israeli police post and set it afire. The police responded, first with tear gas and then rubber bullets. When those ran out and when 40 police were at the point of being lynched they opened fire with live ammunition. Twenty Arabs died and twenty martyrs had been created.

What are the facts?

■ There is no question in anybody's mind that the bloody incident was engineered and organized by Saddam Hussein, the "Butcher of Baghdad", and Yasser Arafat, the master terrorist and "president" of the non-existent state of "Palestine". After virtually every Arab leader has turned against Hussein, Yasser Arafat remains steadfastly loyal to him. And why not? Both have the destruction of Israel at the very top of their agendas -- in fact Arafat has no other agenda; he surely doesn't care at all about the fate of Kuwait. The bloody incident on the Temple Mount served the purposes of both. They rightly expected that it would take, at least temporarily, the heat and the focus off Saddam Hussein and had the potential to weaken the tenuous common front between the United States and our new-found Arab "allies". As to Arafat, the incident was certain to put the "Palestinian problem", which because of the troubles in the Gulf had taken a back seat, once again into the spotlight. That twenty Palestinian Arabs had died was a small price to pay, because human life is cheap for both Hussein and Arafat. Naturally, they had hoped

that a few hundred Jews would also die in that fusillade of rocks. But, by great good fortune, that turned out not to be.

■ One of Saddam Hussein's and Yasser Arafat's main themes is the linkage of any possible withdrawal from Kuwait with a demand for Israeli withdrawal from the "West Bank". This is a ludicrous proposal and, so far at least, most of the Western world has called it just that. If the world's minorities problems must be solved, why not address the "Irish question", which has been festering for centuries? Why not settle the age-old grievances of the

Basques, those of the ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia and, closest to home and right in Iraq, the justified despair of the Kurds, whose aspirations Saddam Hussein "solves" by poison gassing thousands, and by forcefully relocating the rest? Iraq has annexed Kuwait in an act of aggression motivated by greed. Israel came to administer (not to annex!) the "West Bank" and the Gaza strip as the result of its victory in the Six-

Day War. Israel has always been ready to negotiate the ultimate status of these territories. It promised to do so in the Camp David Accords as the result of which it also returned the vast Sinai Peninsula to Egypt.



Birds of a Feather: Saddam Hussein and Yasser Arafat, two enemies of the U.S. in loving embrace.

By his actions and by his statements, Yasser Arafat has clearly demonstrated that he is a bird of the same feather as Saddam Hussein. Arafat's immediate ambition is to shift the focus of interest from the Gulf to Israel, in order to gloss over the crimes of Hussein, to change the conflict of the World vs. Iraq into the conflict of the Arabs vs. Israel, and thus to break up the fragile coalition between the United States and its Arab "allies". The recent bloody incidents in Jerusalem were clearly provoked for that purpose by Arafat and the PLO, in connivance with Saddam Hussein. Regrettably, the United States in great haste, without even ascertaining the facts, and in order to curry favor with our new Arab "allies" (among them the murderous Syrians), introduced a resolution into the Security Council of the United Nations that condemned Israel's actions.

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Facts and Logic About the Middle East

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them work better; nobody ever calls for completely abolishing the Defense Department or big corporations. It's quite a leap for Chubb and Moe to say that their well-founded complaints about the big-city school systems constitute an unassailable case for the obsolescence of public-educational bureaucracies.

THE LAST SECTION of *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* is the place where Chubb and Moe lay out their own education-reform plan. It is essentially a voucher system, though they insist it's not, because public funds are never paid directly into parents' hands—the government would create a tuition stipend for every student, which would be given to the school the student chose to attend. Students with “special needs” (that is, from poor families) would get larger stipends than everybody else, so that schools would have an incentive to take them in. But any school could reject any applicant. Private schools could easily qualify to receive the government funds, and no public school would be guaranteed a student body. The credentialing of teachers would be reduced to a minimum, and the strength of the teachers' unions reduced to the point that principals could hire and fire at will.

There's something facile about totally dismissing all education-reform schemes that have ever really been tried, while presenting as flawless one that exists only in the theoretical realm. It's doubtful that Chubb and Moe's choice plan, which as they present it has a nice fresh sheen (“Without being too literal about it, we think reformers would do well to entertain the notion that choice *is* a panacea,” they write), could withstand the withering intellectual scrutiny to which they subject the present public education system.

One clause of Chubb and Moe's plan is a ban on parental donations to schools that receive the government tuition stipends; like their denial that the plan is a voucher system, this is one of several aspects of it that seem designed to allay the obvious liberal objections to it. Since all the country's elite private schools, and many of the best Catholic schools, operate at a loss and make up the difference through elaborate fund-raising efforts, presumably the entire top tier of the private

education system would opt out of the Chubb-Moe plan rather than give up the right to put the touch on parents and alumni. The students who are in those schools now would stay in them, and their government stipends would go unspent. Students who are now in suburban public schools would presumably stay there, with their educational lives substantially unaffected by the switch to a choice system. The question is what would happen to the people who are now students in bad urban public schools. Conservative intellectuals have learned to make the case for education vouchers solely in behalf of the ghetto poor (rather than the tuition-burdened lower middle class), so the official test of a voucher system is how much it improves education in the slums.

Chubb and Moe never provide a precise scenario for the restoration of education in the ghettos, but they clearly imply that many bad public schools would simply fold, once the people in their neighborhoods were given the option to go somewhere else. In their place new, better schools would be founded by entrepreneurs, who would be able to survive economically because of the government stipends. (Remember that the best existing private schools couldn't accept the stipends without agreeing to forsake private donations; that's why the birth of new schools is an essential part of the plan.) However, it's possible to imagine less rosy outcomes in the cities. Most students might choose simply to stay in their bad schools, in which case the benefits of choice would be theoretical (more freedom, less coercion), not educational. Another possibility—a likelihood, in my view—is that a lot of diploma mills would spring up in the ghettos to cash in on the new availability of government tuition stipends. Released from all but the most rudimentary certification and accreditation requirements, these schools would be free to be bad—possibly even worse than the schools they supplemented or replaced. The clinics that have come into being as a result of the Medicaid program (another voucher system without actual vouchers), and the trade schools that live on government tuition and job-training grants, do not make very encouraging precedents, and they are much more heavily regulated than Chubb and Moe's new schools would be.

The ready answer of choice advocates to worries of this kind is to accuse the worriers, as Chubb did recently in an interview with a *New York Times* reporter, of “really saying that poor people were ‘too stupid’ to pick their own schools.” *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* is full of a certain kind of left-wing boiler plate from the 1960s that has recently been adopted by conservatives, in which “empowerment” and “community control” are the obvious solution to the problems of the city slums. Chubb's remark to the *Times* was rhetorically a clean put-away shot, but it seems a little over-facile considering that his book contains page after page of evidence that family background is the single most important predictor of student achievement—more important than the quality of the school. If the greatest handicap suffered by low-achieving students is their parents' impoverishment, poor education, lax discipline, and scant interest in education (which is what Chubb and Moe say), is it really so ridiculous to worry that these same parents might fail to become tough, savvy, demanding education consumers the instant they obtain the right to decide which school gets their children's tuition money?

The record of community-control plans in public schools—plans that by Chubb and Moe's lights should help somewhat, because they increase local autonomy—is far from overwhelmingly positive. New York City is now retreating from the community-control policies it adopted in the late 1960s, under which student achievement failed to rise. Chubb and Moe themselves say, “Schools do not seem to benefit in a large or systematic way from direct parent participation.” Choice plans are much more widely in use, and much more clearly successful. Minnesota has a tuition tax deduction and a choice plan within the public school system. Oregon is considering a tuition tax credit. Most big-city school districts have started specialized “magnet schools” to which students can apply regardless of where they live. The main motivation behind these is to use choice as a means of voluntary desegregation (the magnet schools usually use racial quotas in picking their students), rather than as a way of eliminating direct democratic control; the main reason they work is that they attract the

better students. What has been the fundamental question since the days of the Coleman Report—How can we substantially improve the urban schools that serve the poorest of the poor?—still doesn't have a once-and-for-all answer.

New York's District 4, in East Harlem, has the best-known ghetto choice program, and Chubb and Moe sing its praises at some length (while never mentioning the more ambitious but less successful federally financed choice program at the Alum Rock Unified School District, in California). They do say, though, in somewhat Ayn Randish tones, that East Harlem's success depends on "a small group of visionaries . . . and their hold on power." In general, the ghetto schools that are producing good results always seem to have a visionary involved—like James Comer in New Haven, or Marva Collins and George Clements in Chicago, or Joe Clark in Paterson, New Jersey—and to be committed to helping students and their parents assimilate into the middle class.

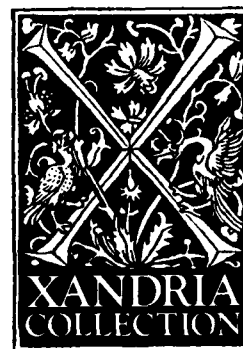
Governments can't legislate visionaries into existence, of course, but the incentives of the marketplace aren't guaranteed to produce them either. The best way to encourage their emergence would be to strengthen the hand of school principals as much as possible, especially with regard to hiring and firing teachers, admitting and expelling students, and making the rules that apply in their schools—in other words, giving them what Chubb and Moe call "autonomy." Chubb and Moe assume that there is an iron link between school autonomy and student choice; I'm unconvinced. There are plenty of examples in this country and elsewhere of government employees—Army company commanders, county agricultural agents, CIA station chiefs—who operate autonomously, and effectively, as employees of big public bureaucracies, because the bureaucracies have been designed around that goal. Why can't it be true of principals, too?

Caution ought not to be uppermost in our minds in dealing with urban public schools, since on the whole there is little danger of making them worse than they already are. There is something offensive, too, about the idea of an ambitious inner-city parent being essentially forced to send her

children to a school where they will get a poor education. But in many big cities this situation doesn't really obtain any longer, because parents who make the effort can easily arrange to move their children from a bad neighborhood school to a public magnet school or to a parochial school with very low tuition. The presence of educational options of this kind for inner-city parents is all to the good; it's the leap from there to the next step—doing away entirely with the attempt to find some way to provide reliably good, government-operated education to the urban poor—that is perilous.

The prospect of dismantling the institutions of the public sector in an area as important as education does deserve to be treated with caution. Critics of government like Chubb and Moe argue that the instrumentalities of government, once created, tend to become, in the authors' words, "part of the status quo that the system inherently works to protect," and so are difficult to change or eliminate after the need for them disappears. We have learned in the past decade that the opposite is also true: in the present American political culture, at least, once a public function is eliminated, it is nearly impossible to get it started again, because taxpayers don't want to pay for anything that doesn't benefit them directly.

Let us imagine that Chubb and Moe's system was enacted, and that it turned out to be like the public school system it replaced in the sense that it worked pretty well everywhere but the inner cities. Let's say that there the public schools substantially withered away, and were replaced by new private schools supported by government tuition-stipend monies—but that these new schools mostly turned out to be terrible. Let's say a consensus emerged that the real answer was to rebuild urban public schools as institutions that would help bring poor people into the mainstream of American life. At that point it would be incredibly difficult to persuade the middle class to support a substantial new program that would help only people who don't pay taxes. Before taking such an immense risk, we ought to make sure we've tried every possible means of making bad schools better which doesn't involve cutting them loose from the webbing of public life. □



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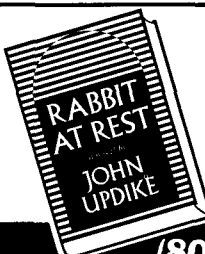
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Russia's Muse

by Olga Andreyev Carlisle

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF
ANNA AKHMATOVA
*translated by Judith Hemschemeyer,
edited and with an introduction
by Roberta Reeder.*
Zephyr Press, \$85.00.

Today I see you
a black angel in the snow,
and I cannot keep this secret to
myself,
God's mark is upon you. . . .

THIS IS HOW the poet Osip Mandelstam described his peer Anna Akhmatova in 1910, at the very beginning of her long career as a poet. She was a great beauty with a great literary gift, which grew and flowered despite the calamities that the twentieth century bestowed on Russia. For many Russians her poems, because of their classical clarity, are second only to Alexander Pushkin's. (To Western readers this might seem of little significance, for Pushkin has proved untranslatable into English. Even Nabokov's renderings of his verse are not successful.)

Born Anna Gorenko, in 1889, at Bolshoi Fontan, on the Black Sea near Odessa, the daughter of a marine engineer, Anna Akhmatova published her first collection of poems, *Evening*, at the age of twenty-two, under the name of a maternal ancestor, because her father had asked her not to use the family name as a writer. As Anna Akhmatova, she quickly became the woman most admired in Petersburg literary circles just before the Revolution. She was married first to Nikolai Gumilyov, a talented, charismatic poet with a taste for foreign travel, who was shot in 1921 for allegedly plotting against the Bolshevik regime. After the Revolution she was relentlessly vilified by Soviet authorities, and by writers as well. Her contemporary Vladimir Mayakovsky had this to say about her (and about their elder, the Symbolist Vyacheslav Ivanov): "Of course, as literary milestones, as the last born child of a collapsing structure, they find their

place on the pages of literary history, but for us, for our epoch—these are insignificant, pathetic, and laughable anachronisms."

But Alexander Blok and Boris Pasternak praised Akhmatova, and so did Mandelstam, who considered her voice the purest in Russian poetry, and Marina Tsvetaeva, who called her "Golden-mouthed Anna of all the Russias." Mandelstam dedicated many poems to her, including his ominous "Preserve My Words":

Preserve my words forever for their
aftertaste of misfortune and
smoke,
for their tar of collective patience
and conscientious work—
water in the wells of Novgorod must
be black and sweetened
to reflect a star with seven fins at
Christmas.

(Adapted by Robert Lowell in
my *Poets on Street Corners*,
Random House, 1968)

Pasternak, remembering in 1928 her "Lot's Wife" in his poem "For Anna Akhmatova," recognized her rare ability to fuse personal fate with history:

In all our affairs, your lines throb
with the high charge of the world.
Each wire is a conductor.

(*Ibid.*)

In the late thirties Akhmatova's son, Lev Gumilyov, and her husband, the art critic Punin, were arrested. So was Mandelstam, who died in a gulag in 1938. Except for an interlude during the Second World War, when Stalin exploited every patriotic impulse to help win the war, persecutions continued, notably with the infamous Zhdanov edict of 1946. It singled out Akhmatova and the prose writer Zoshchenko as pernicious and led to their exclusion from the Writers Union, leaving them without means of support. To earn a little money over the years, Akhmatova did many translations of foreign poetry, which she asked editors not to include in collections of her own poems. After Stalin's death she was slowly rehabilitated and allowed to travel to Italy, Paris, and Oxford, where she was given an honorary degree. But her works continued to be censored. No complete edition has yet been issued in the USSR, though there are plans for one, and plans are being considered for a monument to her on the bank of the Neva River in Leningrad.

THE ARRIVAL BY mail of the two enormous volumes of *The Complete Poems of Anna Akhmatova* was a joy for me. Here at last was all of Akhmatova's poetry in Russian, collected, dated, uncensored, with faithful translations into English and, also in English, ample and reliable commentary, as well as a huge array of beautiful illustrations. Here was the possibility of sharing with English-speaking friends an essential part of a Russian's heritage—Akhmatova's poems, hundreds of them, from the thoroughly feminine lyrics of her early youth to the patriotic verse of the Second World War to the "Poem Without a Hero," with its sweeping assessment of Petersburg's Silver Age at the turn of the century, to the poignant poems of her late years about encounters and reunions that should have happened but did not.

The project coordinator and designer of this monumental book, Ed Hogan; its translator, Judith Hemschmeyer; and the editors Roberta Reeder and Leora Zeitlin are to be congratulated on their achievement, but particularly Hemschmeyer, who, while creating her graceful English imitations of Akhmatova's poems, must have known that the Russian language—the pride and joy of educated Russians, especially as it is used by a master like Akhmatova—will forever remain just beyond reach. *Complete Poems* is a credit to Zephyr Press, a small New England house that publishes elegantly designed books of literary importance produced to last. It is one of the merits of this edition that it brings together a rich variety of voices commenting on Akhmatova. In addition to Reeder's introduction there is a recollection by Isaiah Berlin and two engrossing essays by Anatoly Naiman, a poet from Leningrad now in his fifties, one of a small group of Akhmatova protégés that included Joseph Brodsky. And in Reeder's introduction Raisa Orlova and Lev Kopelev, two well-known dissident writers, provide Akhmatova's own account of Robert Frost's visit with her in Komarovo, near Leningrad, where she had a summer cottage:



BORIS A. FLIPOFF

And then the old man arrived. An American grandfather . . . red-faced, gray-haired, cheerful . . . We sat next to each other in wicker chairs. All kinds of food [was] served and wine was poured. We talked without rushing. And I kept thinking: "Here are you, my dear, a national poet. Every year your books are published . . . they praise you in all the newspapers and journals, they teach you in the schools, the President receives you as an honored guest. And all they've done is slander me! Into what dirt they've trampled me! I've had everything—poverty, prison lines, fear, poems remembered only by heart, and burnt poems. And humiliation and grief. And you don't know anything about this and wouldn't be able to understand it if I told you . . . But now let's sit together, two old people, in wicker chairs. A single end awaits us. And perhaps the real difference is not actually so great?"

It may be that Akhmatova's poetry will inspire a few readers to learn Russian, as it did this book's translator. For lovers of poetry this extreme effort would have its rewards. As the scale of the war waged by Lenin and Stalin against the Soviet people is being revealed, so is the answering grandeur of Russian poetry of the early twentieth century. Boris Pasternak, Marina Tsvetaeva, Osip Mandelstam, Vladimir

Mayakovsky, Anna Akhmatova, the literary giants of Russia, were among the tyrant's victims. Two of these poets, Pasternak and Akhmatova, lived into their seventies, bearing testimony about their times, growing steadily as artists, while Osip Mandelstam perished in a camp and Mayakovsky and Tsvetaeva committed suicide. Akhmatova's "Requiem," describing how she stood in line day after day at the gates of the Kresty Prison, waiting for news of her son and her husband, has become Russia's most famous poem on the subject of Stalinist repression. It was composed between 1935 and 1940, but Akhmatova did not write it down until several years after Stalin's death. Until then it was preserved only in the memories of a few friends who knew it by heart.

This long work begins

No, not under the vault of alien skies,
And not under the shelter of alien wings—
I was with my people then,
There, where my people, unfortunately, were. . . .

In the terrible years of the Yezhov terror, I spent seventeen months in the prison lines of Leningrad. Once, someone "recognized" me. Then a woman with bluish lips standing behind me, who, of course, had never heard me called by name before, woke up from the stupor to which everyone had succumbed and whispered in my ear (everyone spoke in whispers there):

"Can you describe this?"

And I answered: "Yes, I can."

Then something that looked like a smile passed over what had once been her face.

As centennials of Akhmatova's and Pasternak's births are being celebrated and their entire works are beginning to be published, the Russian reading public is being astonished by the scope of their literary achievements. In the case of Akhmatova, the Russian reader is overcome by the sheer beauty and abundance of her work. There is so much here that is new, suppressed for political or sometimes personal reasons. Taken as a whole, as it is now

presented by Zephyr Press, Akhmatova's *oeuvre* is huge, majestic, and magnificent.

English-language readers whose interest is stimulated by these volumes can look forward to Lydia Chukovskaya's *Conversations With Anna Akhmatova*, soon to be published in the United States. Chukovskaya, the dean of Russian literary dissenters and the daughter of the celebrated children's author and critic Kornei Chukovsky, wrote an exact account of her frequent meetings with Akhmatova from 1938 until the poet's death, in 1966.

During the Revolutionary period in Petersburg, in a time of famine, Akhmatova gave her friend Chukovsky milk for Lydia. This was the gesture of a fairy godmother, and Lydia Chukovskaya was to live up to it. She is the author of powerful novellas about a woman's fate under the Soviet terror, and her *Conversations With Anna Akhmatova* lies at the center of her life's work. Reviewing the first volume of the French edition, John Russell wrote,

If [Chukovskaya's] role had been simply that of an amanuensis, the book would hold us uninterruptedly, such is the presence of Akhmatova and the implacable candor with which she conducts herself on all occasions. But, so far from being mere interviews, *Conversations* impresses us as a dialogue between equals—and equals who have survived the worst that our century has had to offer.

Not surprisingly in the case of a writer who made refusal to compromise the essence of her life, stern literary judgments abound in *Conversations*, which is an encyclopedia of Akhmatova's insights into her own and others' work. Of confessional writing, which she detested, she said, "In Pushkin's day poets never talked about themselves. But they said everything all the same—*everything*, to the end." She worshipped Dostoyevsky for his ability to chart the intricacies of the human spirit: "I was rereading *The Adolescent*. What a work! And not at all terrifying. It does not reflect real life, only the facets of Dostoyevsky's soul. . . ." On the other hand, her judgments of Tolstoy could be severe. A passionate believer in women's right to self-fulfillment, she was offended by what she saw as his misogyny: "How disgusting his feelings for Anna [Karenina]! First

he is in love with her, he relishes her, relishes the black curls on her neck. . . . And then he begins to hate her—he even mocks her corpse. Do you remember—'shamelessly stretched out'?"

WHEN I MET Akhmatova, in Moscow in 1963, my overwhelming impression was of her regalness. During my first visits with her she was kind to me, because she knew my parents and because I was a friend of her close friend Nadezhda Mandelstam, the widow of another, still closer friend of her youth, Osip Mandelstam. Nonetheless, at the beginning of our acquaintance our conversations, though cordial, had an undercurrent of strain. Akhmatova wanted to know as much as possible about the Russian emigration in Paris and London, and I, who was born in Paris, answered her questions as well as I could. I knew Akhmatova's poems excoriating those who had left their country, but I did not realize then that a personal wound had inspired these poems—betrayal during the Revolution by a man whom Akhmatova loved, and who had fled Russia, leaving her behind forever. Little by little I came to understand this, while Akhmatova's harshness toward those who had been forced to emigrate softened, turning at times almost to sympathy.

Akhmatova loved Russia passionately. Her patriotic poems of the Second World War period are among the most beautiful ever written in that genre. It must be noted, however, that in the USSR her patriotism is sometimes misrepresented by critics who are uneasy with the current convergence of the two halves of modern Russian literature, the Soviet and the émigré. The latter is still regarded as subversive by the kind of Soviet officials who once attacked Akhmatova as "half nun, half harlot." But in fact Akhmatova's love of Russia transcended both politics and personal involvements. Here is her celebrated "Courage," part of the cycle "The Wind of War" (1941–1945):

We know what lies in balance at this moment,
And what is happening right now.
The hour for courage strikes upon
our clocks,
And courage will not desert us.
We're not frightened by a hail of
lead,

We're not bitter without a roof
overhead—
And we will preserve you, Russian
speech,
Mighty Russian word!
We will transmit you to our grand-
children
Free and pure and rescued from
captivity
Forever!

Again from "The Wind of War":

And you, my friends from the latest
call-up!
My life has been spared to mourn
for you.
Not to freeze over your memory as a
weeping willow,
But to shout all your names to the
whole wide world!
But never mind names!
None of that matters—You
are with us!
Everyone down on your knees!
A crimson light pours!
And the Leningraders come through
the smoke in
even rows—
The living and the dead: for glory
never dies.

From "Victory" (1942–1945):

The first lighthouse flashed over the
jetty,
The precursor of many—
And the sailor who had sailed seas
packed with death,
Alongside death and on the way to
death,
Took off his cap and wept.

Whenever I called on Akhmatova, no meeting was complete without her reading aloud two or three poems at the end of the conversation. It was a wondrous ritual. We would adjourn from the parlor to the small back room where she slept. Sitting very straight, facing her guest across her diminutive writing table, Akhmatova folded her arms, draped in her ivory silk shawl. Closing her eyes, she recited poems from memory in the muted yet sonorous monotone that has been Russian poets' style of recitation since the days of Pushkin. And always she read at least one poem about her Muse. It was an homage to what the poet Anatoly Naiman calls, in one of his essays in *Complete Poems*, "the genuineness of her fate." Akhmatova was deeply religious; she was honoring the supernatural, benevolent power that had sustained her and inspired her throughout the years—what Mandelstam had seen as "God's mark" upon her. □

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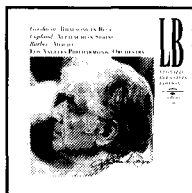
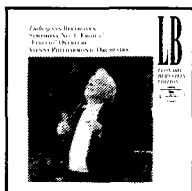
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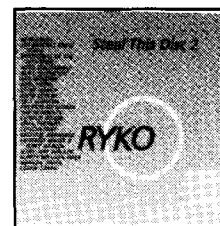


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Brief Reviews



SYMPOSIUM by Muriel Spark. Houghton Mifflin, \$18.95. The events in Ms. Spark's novel branch out from a London dinner party at which a group of amiable gentry and one titled bore amuse one another and the reader, who is aware, as the diners are not, of the paper-thin partition separating their discreet world from a world of crime and lunacy. That comedy is the sister of tragedy is not a new idea, nor does the author (quoting Plato) pretend that it is. She simply makes a fine, witty story out of the relationship.

ART ACROSS AMERICA by William H. Gerds. Abbeville, \$495.00. Mr. Gerds presents "Two Centuries of Regional Painting" in three tomes, boxed, pack mule not included. The announced purpose of the work is to "increase the numbers of recognized professional painters" and to "make clear how vital a creative spirit pervaded all of America," which is what it precisely and effectively does. The author makes "no claims to have discovered any new 'great' American painters," or to have discerned distinct local schools or styles. (The survey ends in 1920, precluding discussion of such as non-objectivity, regionalism, op, and pop.) Great names get no more detailed treatment than the rank and file, who nevertheless produced works providing "considerable visual delectation," as the generous illustrations prove they did. Although Mr. Gerds does not propose regional patterns, something dimly resembling national patterns emerges from his impressive mass of information. If painter X studied with master Y in New York and then moved to Chicago or Denver in search of patrons, he took Y's influence with him, and this process ensured that although subject matter might be regional, style was not. There seems to have been a second pattern of action. Whereas in



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Europe if any four painters of similar tastes got together, they were likely to give themselves a name and issue a manifesto of aesthetic principles, in America any two painters on the same spot were likely to open an art school, or persuade the local citizens to found a museum, or both—regardless of whether they agreed on anything else. The ground Mr. Gerdt has to cover leaves little space for anecdote or analysis, but the text is no flat-footed catalogue. Unexpected items turn up, such as the settlement of an artist in Taos because his wagon broke down on the way to Mexico, or the Baltimore painter credited with mysteriously romantic subject matter—until someone realized what that matter actually was. The book is organized by states, with painters located in the places where they lived longest or did their best work, not where they were born or trained. This system has produced one exasperating deficiency in the index, which gives no clue as to which of half a dozen references applies to coverage of a particular painter, and which merely to passing mentions of that artist.

MEMOIR OF A RUSSIAN PUNK by Edward Limonov. Grove Weidenfeld, \$19.95. The author's two previous semi-autobiographical novels have dealt with his adventures after fleeing the Soviet Union. This one describes what he fled from—the life of teenage malcontents in the dismal outskirts of Kharkov in 1958. With nothing to look forward to but futureless factory work, overcrowded apartments, and perpetual boredom, the lads have taken to the streets, petty thievery, and as much alcohol as they can lay hands on. The book covers a two-day holiday celebrating the Glorious October Revolution. The events are inglorious and culminate in vicious gang crime. Mr. Limonov creates a convincing picture of a bleak society, but his novel is hardly for squeamish readers.

WILD ICE by Ron Naveen, Colin Monteath, Tui De Roy, and Mark Jones. Smithsonian, \$29.95. The contributors are all photographers and experienced Antarctic workers. Their pictures of penguins, icebergs, seals, and scenery are always delightful and sometimes startlingly beautiful. They make the book worthwhile. The text is another matter. The authors can all write effective-

ly, but there seems to have been little editorial supervision, and because these four people are alike in their concern for the preservation of the Antarctic wilderness, they rehash the same statistics and the same ideas to the point of boredom. Grammatical errors are also repeated. The book offers a fine look at a wonderful place, but it could have been better.

AMERICA photographs by Jake Rajs. Rizzoli, \$50.00. Mr. Rajs's splendid color photographs are grouped under the headings of wilderness, farms and towns, shorelines, roadways, and cities. They lovingly celebrate the variety and beauty to be found from Maine to Hawaii, while turning a blind lens to the less attractive aspects of United States scenery.

A WRITER'S REALITY by Mario Vargas Llosa. Syracuse University, \$24.95. The pieces in Mr. Vargas Llosa's book derive from lectures delivered at Syracuse University. They all have to do with the nature and purpose of fiction, but the author approaches that general topic from unexpected angles and explores it by subtle and provocative reasoning. In remarks on the extravagances of early Peruvian chronicles, he observes that

fantasies often reveal more about the reality of the era than its truths.

... sulphurous outrages come from male and female demons, fastidiously catechised in the Indian villages by the extirpators of idolators ... to justify the devastations of idols, amulets, ornaments, handicrafts, and tombs. This teaches us more about the innocence, fanaticism, and stupidity of the time than the wisest of treatises.

It is a short step from that opinion to the argument that fantasies, lies—fictions, in short—can benefit real society when an author uses them to create an equally real metaphorical society. Mr. Vargas Llosa describes the means by which he has tried to do this, discussing the origin and structure of each of his novels. The process he reveals is fascinating and intellectually very complicated. Followers of his work may be surprised by discrepancies between what they have found there and what the author expected them to find.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

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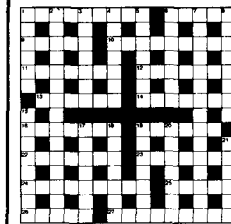
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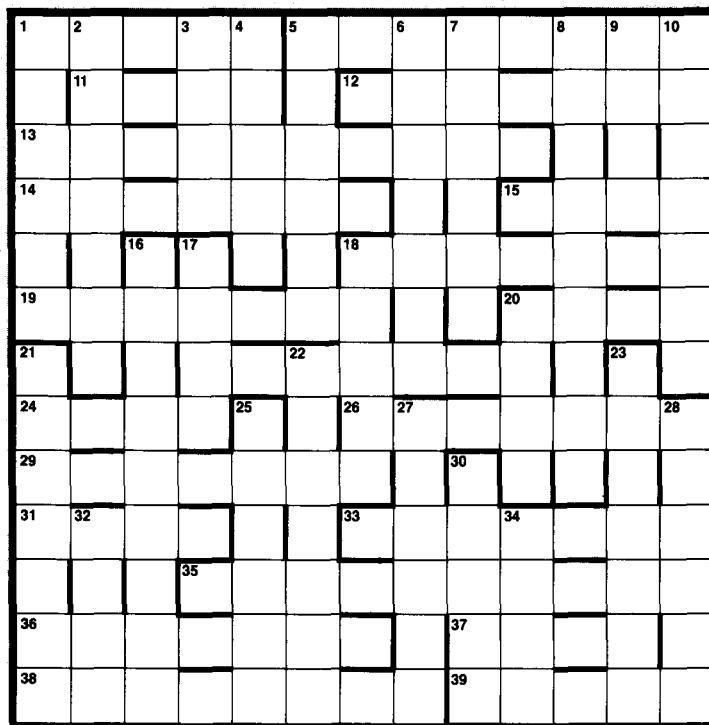
BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

FOR BEGINNERS

Each clue's answer should have its first letter removed to the correspondingly numbered blank before entry in the diagram. The letters thus removed will spell out the members of a certain group. The unclued central Across entry will offer an explanation for the removed group. Answers include six proper nouns and an uncommon word at 37 Across.

8D 21D 24A 27D 3D 29A 28D 19A 9D
31A 26A 18D 11A 37A 22D 20A 1A
25D 38A 5D 18A 5A 20D 36A 30D 2D 34D 33A 12A
14A 1D 17D 16D 6D 10D 39A 13A 32D
4D 35A 7D 23D 15A

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 99.



ACROSS

1. Young, gung-ho test pilot (6)
5. Sheet Catherine the Great's successor found in lake (9)
11. Italian city shelter accepts beggar finally (5)
12. Trouble with snake in saint's vessel (8)
13. Chip in in different ways by proxy (11)
14. Expert help assumes six conditions (8)
15. Tree line article (5)
18. Leaving money for tip due (8)
19. Southern colony of the Soviet Union seemed cold (8)
20. South African land of birth (5)
24. Not at all fit to be seen on the inside (5)
26. Most green flies eat on the move (8)
29. Shakespearean figure's grasping the materials (8)
31. Pound egg into gun and rub it in (5)

33. Identical seeds divided by large female (8)
35. Strong wind has dislocated hornet and flower (11)
36. In fun, poorly disguise doubt (8)
37. Enter buggy made of wood (5)
38. Circle pitch about deal for medical instruments (9)
39. Number one trap in New York (6)

DOWN

1. Second appearance of reactionary group in House of Representatives (7)
2. Sleep-inducing drama from Japan about car developed by jerk (8)
3. French king swimming Rhine (5)
4. Performer, in part, is talented (6)
5. Leave volume with a member of a fraternal order (7)
6. Serialized story about one piece of earth's surface (8)
7. 50 caught in storm aboard ship (7)

8. Dopey scheduled around major conflict (10) (*hyphenated*)
9. Headdress of one in *Gone With the Wind* scene (5)
10. Catch ten flying fish (8)
16. Hindu spirit claims ruins (10)
17. Descartes pursues island goddess (5)
18. Intimate apparel is resurrected? (6)
20. Nothing the way it appears in common mirage (5)
21. For Lent, bail out trial participant (8)
22. Exceed 1.067 kilometers, breaking old record (8)
23. Poke fun at guys top to bottom for convenience (8)
25. Toast heroic stranger, gulping last of champagne (7)
27. Bill permits plaques (7)
28. All year following Mock Turtle (7)
30. Spanish agreement about a remote expedition (6)
32. Hood shot out after word from a rapper (5)
34. German city being neutral (5)

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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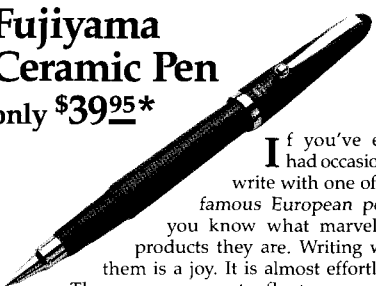
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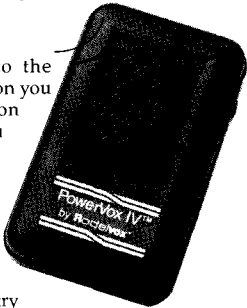


If you've ever had occasion to write with one of the famous European pens, you know what marvelous products they are. Writing with them is a joy. It is almost effortless. The pen appears to float across the paper—even your thoughts seem to flow more freely. The substantial drawback, however, as with so many other nice things, is that the price of these luxury pens is awfully high. It's easy to spend \$150 or more on one of them. Our Japanese friends have created their own version of these luxury pens. They are equally pleasing and quite similar in appearance, heft and feel. They have the same hi-lacquer finish, the same fine gold-tone accents and the same gold-plated clip as the famous European luxury pens. The exclusive ceramic writing tip provides silk-smooth, effortless writing. It will never flatten, stall or skip, even after hardest and longest use. *Fujiyama Ceramic Pen*. #4800A650 (\$4.95)

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The instructions to the *PowerVox IV* caution you to have the control on "very low" when you first try the instrument. If you do not, it could scare the day-lights out of you. The thing is truly astonishing and in a way almost unbelievable until you try it and convince yourself. Put *PowerVox IV* in your shirt pocket and realize to your amazement that you can hear whispered conversations up to 50 feet away, a pin drop 10 feet away, and even hear what people are talking about in the next room. A walk through the woods will reveal birds, deer, squirrels and even little crawly things that you never would have known about otherwise. It really increases your range of hearing by at least 10x! *PowerVox IV* comes with a full complement of attachments: Belt/Pocket Clip, Bud-Style Earphones, and 20' Headphone Cord (for TV). Batteries are not included. *PowerVox IV*. #4211A650 (\$4.95)



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WORD HISTORIES

Etymologies derived from the files of the Dictionary of American Regional English

BY CRAIG M. CARVER



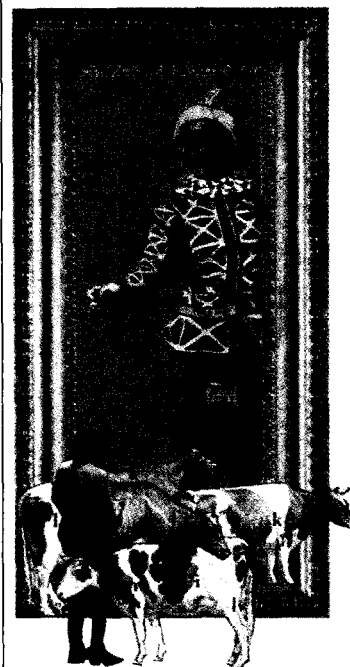
farce

In a 1988 memo released last July the Justice Department alleged that the Northrop Corporation, the manufacturer of the B-2 bomber, had provided the Air Force with false information on costs and scheduling—and that the Air Force had known it and done nothing. “Northrop’s cost schedule control system,” the memo said, “is essentially a *farce*.” The memo’s use of *farce* was a piquant word choice, etymologically speaking. The earliest sense of *farce* is “forcemeat” or “stuffing” (“Make a *farce* with the livers minced small,” an eighteenth-century cookbook directs), and the word is borrowed from the Old French *farcir* (to stuff), but ultimately

from the Latin *farcire*. The *farce* that is a broadly satirical comedy also started out as filler—ad-lib gags and buffoonery that actors inserted in medieval religious dramas or mystery plays. (Similarly, the earlier Medieval Latin word *farsa* or *farsia* referred to the various phrases inserted in litanies between the words *kyrie* and *eleison*—for example, “*Kyrie, genitor ingenite, vera essentia, eleison*”—and to other expansions of liturgical formulas.) Once also a verb, *farce* had the sense of padding or spicing up a speech or literary piece (“With what stuffe our old historiographers have *farced* up their huge volumes”—Raphael Holinshed, *The First Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, 1577).

blackmail

When Iraq’s President Saddam Hussein began taking Westerners as hostages last August, President Bush warned that “America and the world will not be *blackmailed* by this ruthless policy.” *Blackmail* was originally protection money that predatory Scottish chieftains forced farmers and small landowners on the English border to pay in return for immunity from plunder (“Sundry



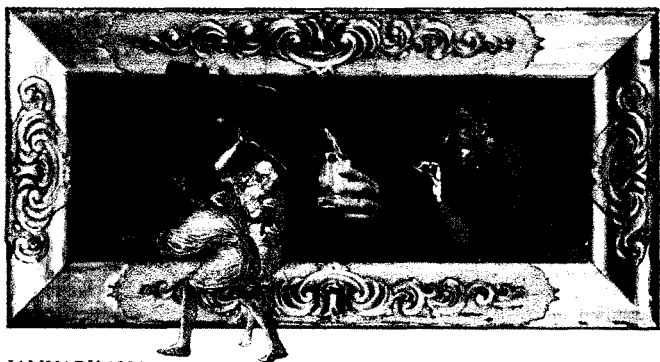
ruckus

Last year, when William Bennett, then the nation’s “drug czar,” believed that a \$231 million slice was going to be cut out of the Administration’s budget for drug programs, he lost no time in criticizing Congress. After Congress restored the funding, Bennett backtracked a bit, saying, “I’m sorry about the rancor this has caused. But we needed this money. We were taken completely by surprise on these cuts, and raising a *ruckus* seemed the only way to get this money back.” *Ruckus* (a commotion, row, noisy disturbance) probably originated in the southern United States, where, especially in the Appa-

lachians, moonshine is sometimes called *ruckus juice* (because when you drink it you may start a *ruckus*). Most lexicographers claim that it is a blend of *ruction* and *rumpus*. *Ruction* (a heated quarrel, brawl, riot) is sometimes said to derive from *eruption* but is more likely to have come from *insurrection*, specifically meaning the Irish insurrection of 1798 (“The *ruction* has been hardly in the fearless old Hibernian manner”—*Saturday Review*, 1886). *Rumpus* (riot, disturbance) may be a shortened form of *rumbustious* or *rambustious* (boisterous, violent), which has the well-known American variant *rambunctious*. These words are probably mod-

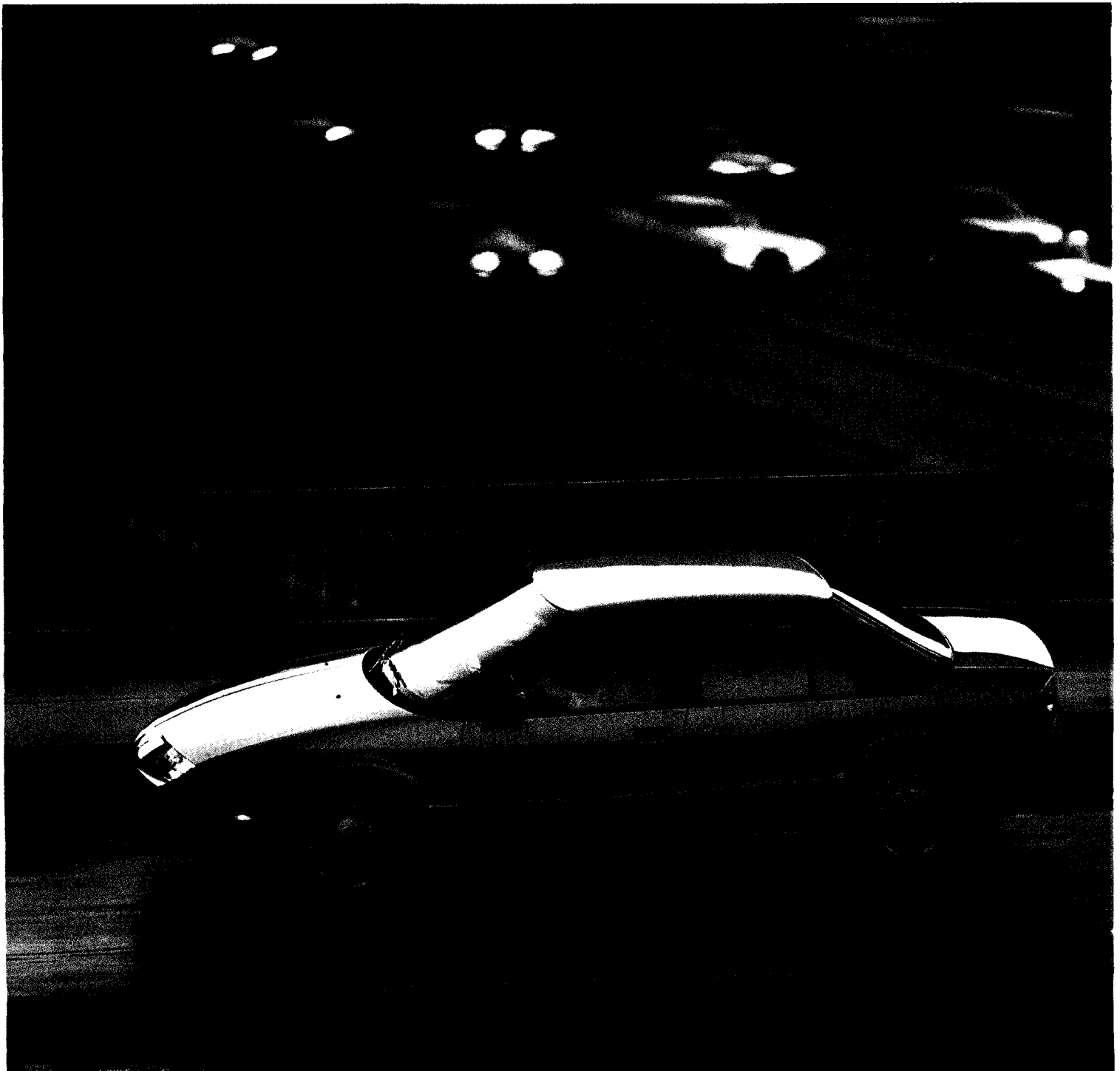
eled after the English dialect expressions *rumbustical*, *rumgumptious*, and *rumbumpious*, all meaning “boisterous.” Alternatively, there is an outside chance that *rumpus* is from Swiss-German students’ slang use of Greek *rombos* (the Greek meaning is “spinning top; commotion, disturbance”). *Ruckus*, however, may have a much simpler derivation. It may come straight from *raucous* (strident, boisterously disorderly), perhaps influenced by English dialect’s *ruck*, meaning “noise” or “racket” (“‘Will they come and settle on the net, Dave?’ ‘Not a bird of ’em if thou keeps up that *ruck*’”—G. Manville Fenn, *Dick o’ the Fens*, 1888). *Raucous* itself is a learned eighteenth-century borrowing from Latin *raucus* (hoarse, harsh) and is related to *riot*, *rout*, and *rumor*, all ultimately from the Indo-European root *reu- (to roar). The simplest explanation is that *ruckus* may be a variant of *fracas* (noisy quarrel, brawl), which is from the Italian *fracasso* (din, uproar), which in turn is from *fraccassare* (to smash; to crash).

of her Majesty’s loving Subjects within the said [northern] counties . . . have been forced to pay a certain rate of money, corn, cattle, or other consideration, commonly there called by the name of *black-mail*”—*Statutes at Large*, 1601). It was made a felony during Queen Elizabeth’s reign, punishable by death. The *mail* in *black-mail* has nothing to do with the postal service, but is a term for rent or payment which is still used in Scotland. *Blackmail* is *black* because it was usually paid with goods that were not “white”—that is, were not silver money.



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